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Unknown innovators



The Commer two-stroke TS3 engine was produced by the Kent-based firm Tilling-Stevens, who were part of the Rootes Group at the time. I photographed his early Tilling-Stevens lorry at the Carrington Steam Rally back in 2009. I don't know the significance of the workshop air compressor though! Photo Stephen Pullen.

I never liked school. As far as I was concerned there was very little of interest to me, and I never forgave them for not putting me in the physics classroom that was full of cutaway petrol engines, and making me do cookery instead!

Anyway, this dislike all changed when I went to college to study for my City & Guilds in motor mechanics. In fact I enjoyed it so much that a few years later I gave up my job totally and went back to study electromechanical engineering. I even realised that maths is actually a fascinating subject!

Anyway, maybe I'm just strange, but one of the things I really enjoyed back then was to research the life stories of the engineers and scientists who pioneered the machines, processes and theories that we were studying. It brought the whole subject to life for me, and while others in the class may have found certain subjects dry and boring, I could almost 'see' the engineer involved toiling away at the bench, solving problems, trying new ideas that perhaps failed, and then finally succeeding in their goal.

This interest in the 'unknown' engineer has stayed with me ever since. In fact it annoys me that people can appear on television and become famous (and wealthy!) for doing little more than boiling an egg or whatever, but the scientists, engineers etc., who have made a far greater contribution to the world (in my opinion), are totally ignored.

Perhaps though, that's how many people working in engineering want it, to be the unknown 'backroom boys' – and 'backroom girls' or course. I can name loads of superb female engineers of the past, and they're even more forgotten...

So, for my comment I've used Bob Tuck's feature 'Sounds wonderful' for inspiration. In it he mentions the evocative sounds of the diesel two-stroke engines of the past. But who invented the two-stroke engine?

It is actually accepted that there were three 'fathers' to the two-stroke concept. The first was a Glaswegian named Dugald Clerk, later Sir Dugald Clerk. Born in 1854, he patented a two-stroke engine in 1881. This did however, have

a separate cylinder for charging the combustion cylinder.

The 'modern' two-stroke, which uses the crankcase as the engine's 'charging pump', was developed by Joseph Day. Born in London in 1855, he worked for the Bath-based crane maker Stothert & Pitt. He later started his own engineering firm, but it appears he sadly died in obscurity.

The third 'father' will probably be far more well known to transport enthusiasts – Alfred Scott, who developed a practical two-stroke engine, and went on to produce the famous range of Scott motorcycles. A Scott 'Flying Squirrel' is still on the list of motorbikes I'd like to own!

Anyway, I'll go no further here. At least these 'pioneers' have been mentioned, and to try to cram all their fascinating life stories into such a small space would do them a disservice.

Gentlemen, you have not been forgotten!

Stephen

STEPHEN PULLEN

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Cover story

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ONCE HEARD *NEVER FORGOTTEN*

From the day he was born in County Durham during 1955, Stuart Ritchie has lived his life surrounded by all manner of sounds. However one distinctive symphony from his earliest days which he never tires of hearing is the crackle of the Commer TS3 two-stroke. But unlike those of us who need to search the rally scene to hear a working example, Stuart has his own superbly restored, TS3 powered, 1959 Commer-Unipower conversion parked in the garage at the bottom of the yard. Bob Tuck gives him the excuse to listen to that superb sound again.





E&N Ritchie have owned the Commer-Unipower conversion from new in 1960.



Stuart Ritchie.

With a history going back to 1898 (yes that's 119 years – and counting) there isn't much the Ritchie family haven't seen.

Everything from mangle wheels to road wheels have been bought, sold and used by four generations of this Hetton-le-Hole based concern so it's perhaps no surprise the present management team – brothers Stuart and Alastair – have pooled their memories (and family archives) to document their fascinating story in: 'Ritchies of Hetton-le-Hole.'

However, rather than just read a book about what the company has contributed to both the locality and the road haulage world, the Ritchie family has also amassed a stunning collection of classics which in itself gives a fascinating look at transport life going back through the years to the days of steam.

It was in 1970 that their late father Colin, decided to take the firm's much travelled, 1939 Thornycroft Sturdy to the local steam fair at Birtley. In truth, people in the North-East didn't quite know what to make of an old (diesel) wagon coming to a steam rally but that one step – which was subsequently done by many others – began to snowball and so create the UK's extremely healthy, heritage commercial preservation scene.

That Thornycroft four-wheeler is still very much an active participant on the rally circuit but it wasn't until 1992, that Ritchie's had a second vehicle to join it. This too was originally used by the family as a revenue earner but if truth was known – and Colin Ritchie had perhaps been given his own way – PBR 806 would never have been bought new in the first place. Colin didn't like the original specification but as it was a cancelled order, it was a take it – or leave it – offer. And as the price was right, Colin's Uncle Norman decided they would take it.

In hindsight this did prove to be a good thing because were it not for the poor



EBB 719 dates new from 1937. Rated to carry 4-5 ton loads, these early Commers are recalled for their poor Bendix brakes. *Photo E&N Ritchie collection.*

specification, this Commer-Unipower six-wheeler (like many other Ritchie motors of the time) would have probably been worked to death. Instead, it survived and once fully restored, it too has given pleasure to many – especially those who love the fabulous 'knocker' sound.

COMMER FAVOURITE

Pressure on space means we'll have to fast forward through the early Ritchie history. In the 1950s, the family business was then headed up by the two brothers Ernest and Norman with Ernest's son Colin (who was born in 1929) having the mechanical know how input when it came to vehicle purchases. The Ritchie business then involved buying and selling cars, petrol and providing all manner of motoring / workshop services; generating all manner of building materials

under the banner of Hetton Sand & Gravel plus running a small but diverse haulage operation.

Like many others of the time who carried on such a varied blend of activities, the modest Ritchie fleet list was also mixed. Although it was the marque of Commer that had become a family favourite, especially for their local tipping operation: "Something like 90% of our new Commers were bought through the Minories dealership on Tyneside," says Stuart, "but it was always the case – whenever we bought a new motor – that someone from Ritchies would go and collect it from the factory. Ernest always thought that new vehicles would be thrashed by the delivery driver and if we picked them up, at least we'd know they were well cared for right from the outset."

As soon as he was old enough, Stuart



321 JPT was new in 1960. This T53 powered Commer had an 11ft 9in wheelbase and was known as a three quarter length tipper, and could be used for general haulage as well.

Photo E&N Ritchie collection.



WPT 52 was new in April 1957. The smiling face is Joe Bleanch. The petrol engine in this Commer QX 7-ton tipper was based on the one used in the Humber staff car during war time years. Photo E&N Ritchie collection.



Matty Hall is the figure pictured with the second Commer-Unipower which Ritchies used to operate. It was new in February 1962. Photo E&N Ritchie collection.



Left: This shot was taken in May 1967 at Team Valley, Gateshead, at the regional Lorry Driver of the Year competition. Joe Henderson is driving PBR 806. Note it still hasn't been sign-written since the day it was delivered new. Photo E&N Ritchie collection. **Right:** PBR in 1987 after 17 years in storage. It started up no problem! Photo E&N Ritchie collection.



would often accompany his father Colin to pick up a new wagon and he recalls that other youngsters in his class at school were more than envious: "One day I told them I was going with my dad to collect a new AEC and they couldn't believe I was actually going all the way to London."

However, when it came to PBR 806 this was one Commer that wasn't bought through Minorities or even collected new from the Commer Cars' Dunstable factory: "At this time," recalls Stuart, "we used to have a caravan parked in what's now our yard. It may sound a bit strange but back then, Hetton was very much surrounded by countryside. The caravan was owned by Joe Dowe who happened to be a salesman for the Sunderland based Rootes / Commer dealership of Northern Autoport which in turn was an offshoot to the large painting concern of A Hector Grabham. Joe would come and stay in the caravan most weekends and although he knew we bought our motors through Minorities, he mentioned one day that they had a brand new Commer-Unipower

six-wheeler that was a cancelled order."

During the 1950s, operators were used to having to wait (a varied period) for any new vehicle so picking up a cancelled order was a great way to jump this queue – however Colin wasn't impressed: "My dad didn't like this particular vehicle's basic specification," recalls Stuart. "It was fitted with smaller 8.25x20 tyres and only had a 4-speed gearbox. And while he liked the idea of a six-wheeler, he didn't think it would be any good for distance work. But in the end, Uncle Norman decided to buy it and it was delivered already fitted with a basic platform body. It had also been spray painted - albeit in slightly the wrong shade of green – but as we were so busy, we actually ran it for quite a while without it being sign-written."

WHAT A SOUND

E&N Ritchie took delivery of their first Commer back in 1934 and more than 20 years on, all the Commers they ran would still be fitted with petrol engines. The latest ones were superbly smooth – and quick –

but they were of course heavy on fuel so the launch of the Tilling Stevens TS3 diesel engine into the new stylish looking '50s Commer certainly caught Colin Ritchie's attention.

As an option to this petrol-powered variant, Commer had long offered the Perkins diesel but this make of engine was never a Ritchie favourite: "We had an Austin tipper with a Perkins engine and also two Proctors – that were used on distance work," recalls Stuart. "But all of these P6s were awful to start – I think it was their poor compression." As we'll explain later, PBR was a far better starter and of course, made a sound all of its own.

Although taken over by the Rootes Group in 1949, the Maidstone based concern of Tilling-Stevens (TS) is credited with the creation to this tremendous power pack which squeezed six pistons into three cylinders. Working on a two (rather than four) stroke principle meant the air had to be blown into the cylinders as part of the induction process. It was a small engine and



The lorry didn't require too much work to restore, but it was fitted with a 5-speed gearbox during the rebuild. Photos E&N Ritchie collection.



Line-up of the Ritchie classics, together with an MAN from the modern fleet. Photo E&N Ritchie collection.

Vin Allen driving the Commer at the prestigious Cart Marking Ceremony in London. All of the Ritchie classics have been to this event. Photo E&N Ritchie collection.

slipped easily into the Commer chassis in a position which allowed the manufacturer to fit their easy access cab ahead of the engine.

In its heaviest standard form as a four-wheeler, Commer were to rate these TS3s as a 7-tonner. However, if you wanted a six-wheel 10-tonner, Commer worked closely with the Perivale (London) based concern of Universal Power Drives Ltd (Unipower) to do the conversion. "They tended to use the long wheelbase tipping chassis to start with," says Stuart, "and after lengthening the chassis, they'd use Commer hubs in the extra Unipower trailing axle that had a balance beam set-up in the build."

PBR 806 had obviously passed through the Unipower factory before heading north but as the 'BR' original registration denotes, the Commer was first taxed at Sunderland: "People come up to us now," says Stuart, "and after taking one look at the registration, they then say it must have been an ex Vaux brewery motor. I know Vaux ran a few of these six wheelers – some I think on the run to Usher Brewery at Edinburgh – but this was never one of theirs as we were the first owner."

DE-COKE IN MOTION

The four-wheel short wheelbase tipper 99 DPT was the first Ritchie TS3 powered Commer into service but Stuart recalls this only lasted about seven months before the engine needed major attention. It was a learning curve for the Ritchie team and the

first thing they learned was that the engine preferred Shell Rotella T oil rather than the Mobil Delvac Ritchie had long used: "I think Shell must have made that oil specifically for the two-strokes," said Stuart.

The drivers of these new Commers also had to adopt a totally different – more aggressive – driving technique. Instead of being light footed with a petrol engine Commer, the TS3 powered vehicle had to be driven hard with the revs kept as high as possible so it would de-coke itself. The model soon became popular with other hauliers, although the sight of sparks flying out of the Commer exhaust still seemed an awesome sight – especially if it occurred during the hours of darkness.

Not every Ritchie driver would be as forceful and Harry Evans is one in particular who was positively gentle with his driving technique. Harry is recalled as always wearing his old Army beret when he drove and then rarely went over 30mph. Such a style meant that carbon quickly built up and Stuart recalls the Ritchie mechanics had to take off the exhaust manifold and by using a bent scraper / screwdriver they'd gouge away the internal build up.

PBR came on the road in October 1960 and while it should have been used on long distance work, the fitting of a 4-speed gearbox meant it could only do 40mph – flat out. It was no good at that pace so it ended up being allocated to Joe Henderson who worked it on local distribution work: "Back

then," recalls Stuart, "we had an arrangement with Tommy Ford, the transport manager at BRS Thornaby depot on Teesside. Every day we'd send him down three of our vehicles and they'd be used on loads their trunks had brought in during the night. Joe and his Commer did all sorts although it regularly carried those big tanks of Guinness to Wood & Watson at Durham for it to be bottled."

Ritchies have long had a policy that whenever it was possible, their vehicles would be garaged over night. It was this routine that when Joe came in after ending a particular day's work, he'd put the Commer into its allocated parking space. What Joe didn't know was that some clinkers (generated when the TS3 de-coked itself) had found their way into the spare wheel carrier. Tucked away at the back this was a resting place for things like a sheet, chocks and ropes which were dry as tinder due to some warm summer weather, and of course the inclusion of the red hot clinkers eventually meant there was a fire generated. "Luckily there were windows in the bottom shed," says Stuart, "and someone passing by saw what was happening and raised the alarm."

PLATING AND TESTING

PBR was lucky enough to escape that incident and by 1967, it had been moved onto working at Hill's Doors at Stockton which became a regular traffic for the Ritchie fleet. The Commer slipped easily into this role as it didn't travel too far but what was



The Commer's interior.



David Hutchinson gives the Commer a quick wash before our drive out.



The extra master cylinder added by Ritchie's to enhance the Commer's brakes.



The 6x2 conversion was done by Unipower (Universal Power Drives Ltd).

to become a huge headache for the Ritchie management was the prospect of having to plate and test all of their fleet.

The Transport Act of 1968 was to see an end of the closed shop generated by the 'A', 'B' and 'C' carriers licensing system, as easy to get 'O' operates licences were introduced. To established hauliers like E&N Ritchie, this change actually removed a massive amount of value from the company's worth.

If that wasn't bad enough, vehicles like the Commer-Unipower had to be brought back to premier condition in order to pass what would be an annual test. Ritchies had always looked after their motors and this is reflected in how they carried out major modifications to the six-wheeler's original braking system. When Unipower added the extra axle, they didn't add any more effort to the standard air over hydraulic braking system and just took an extension of the hydraulic pipe to operate the third axle brakes.

In 1962, Ritchies had bought 8730 PT - another 6x2 Unipower TS3 but this one had a 5-speed 'box and bigger 9.00x20 tyres. Capable of 53mph it was worked hard but its driver complained of the brakes dropping away: "It actually ran into the back of someone and when the brakes were tried out, they were found to be wanting. To create more stopping power, a second master cylinder was fitted in tandem to bring the brakes up to scratch. And once we did this first six-wheeler, we did the same conversion / up-rating to PBR."

By 1969, Ernest Ritchie was 77 and his brother Norman aged 69. To say these two company elders were worried about the new testing regime was putting it mildly: "I can still remember them moaning all doom & gloom," says Stuart. In fairness, it wasn't so much the ability for the Ritchie garage staff to bring the fleet back up to scratch but more the investment in renewing so many parts – on what was quite an old motor – that made the management ponder whether the exercise was simply cost effective.

OUT OF SIGHT – NOT OUT OF MIND

On 3rd April 1969, PBR was officially MoT plated and tested as capable of carrying freight for the next 12 months. That was the good news but the bad news was it could only gross a maximum of 15 tons. With having

an unladen weight of just under 5-tons, this meant for a 10-ton payload which was exactly the same rating Commer gave it when it left the Unipower production line in 1959. However to E&N Ritchie this was a 33% drop in payload potential because they (like many other operators of the time) simply reckoned the Commer-Unipower as capable of carrying a 15 ton payload thus grossing closer to 20 tons.

Although PBR was still good enough to be used on local work, time was catching up with it. Commer had slipped down the Ritchie preference list as AEC became the first choice for long distance / general haulage work. Having had so much money spent on the TS3 six-wheeler it was too good to scrap (and worth very little if sold second-hand). Instead, by 1970 it became categorized as a spare motor which in essence meant it was



Specification

Make / Model:

Chassis No:

Year:

Registration:

Engine:

Gearbox:

Gross vehicle weight:

Top speed:

Fuel return:

Body:

Commer-Unipower 6x2 conversion 10-tonner

CD7 7620254

Built in 1959 - 1st registered 19.10.60

PBR 806

Commer TS3 3.261-litres six-cylinder

two-stroke diesel 105bhp

Originally 4-speed – now a 5-speed

15 tons

40mph with 4-speed box; 53mph with 5-speed

12mpg with 4-speed box; 19.5mpg with 5-speed box

Original fitted by Northern Autoport; replacement built by Joseph Bailey.



Dan Smith, our driver for the day, parks the Commer outside the Ritchie offices.

pushed into the corner of the garage – and just left there. And as all sorts of assorted bits and pieces were piled onto its platform body, over the years it just became cocooned in ‘valuable’ rubbish.

Rubbish is our word and not a Ritchie description because they’ve long been aware that one man’s junk is another man’s jewelry. Stuart recalls one of PBR’s last jobs was to clear out the stores of the Turvey car dealership of material that was just destined for the tip but with Colin Ritchie’s foresight, was gradually recycled to all manner of buyers.

For the next 17 years, lots of things might have happened in the Ritchie story but these passed PBR by as it just hibernated the time away. In ’87 it was decided to: ‘see if it would start,’ and Stuart well recalls the day as it had been a hard enough job just to find the Commer’s key. There was something of a crowd of Ritchie / Commer fans who

gathered to see if the engine would even turn over but you’ve guessed it - with no water in; 17 year old diesel in the tank and no expectation whatsoever anything would happen, PBR purred into life in less than half a turn: “It was ticking over as though it had just come in from London,” recalls Stuart.

HAPPY WANDERER

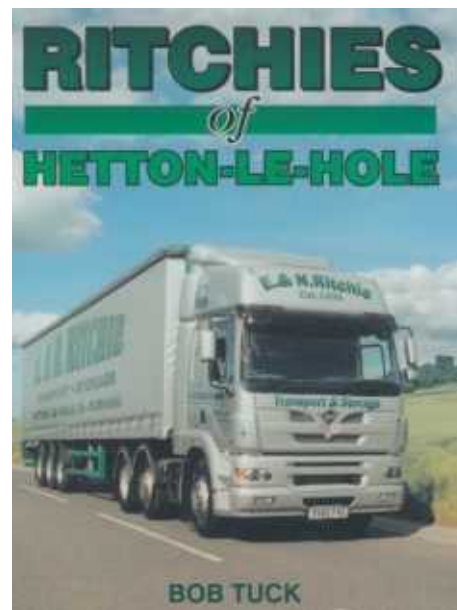
Apart from things like hydraulic brake piping and other items that had rotted away, PBR didn’t require too much restoration work although there’s no surprise it was given a 5-speed gearbox during the rebuild. There were still plenty of Commer parts salted away in the Ritchie stores although Stuart recalls it took their last front bumper for that particular model of cab. Sadly Colin Ritchie didn’t see PBR restored to its full glory as he died (before his time) at the age of 61 in 1990 which was two years before the six-wheeler came back on the road.

Now with 25-years service on the preservation scene, the Ritchie Commer is considered something of an old favourite. True, there’s been a mechanical blip or two in that time, and the shearing of the shaft to power the fan meant in ’95 it did Ted Hannon’s Northern Run on the back of Iain Wilkinson / Kevin McNamara’s ERF low loader. At the turn of the Millennium, it had a new engine fitted but if you want to see Stuart Ritchie blush then just ask him the reason why?

At the grand old age of 57, PBR still generates smiles wherever it goes. In ’05, yours truly had the pleasure of clocking a few miles behind the wheel and all I wanted to do was change gear. I didn’t need to but of course every shift – up or down – prompted a great variance in engine revs which of course is music to the ears. Once you’d heard a TS3 Commer, it’s a sound you will never forget. ♦



The lorry was originally fitted with a body by Northern Autoport; the replacement was built by Joseph Bailey.



The history of the company going back to 1898 is told in the book, ‘Ritchies of Hetton-le-Hole’.



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Albion restored to celebrate anniversary

A leading British independent oil blender has provided the lubricants for a restoration project to celebrate Scottish haulage company Galt Transport's 70th anniversary this year.

The Dumbarton-based haulier has turned back the clock by restoring a 1937 Albion CL125 lorry with a little help from Morris Lubricants, who have the distinction of supplying lubricants for vehicles ranging from ultra-modern to classic.

Managing director Allan Galt, who completed his apprenticeship at Albion Motors, Glasgow, acquired the Albion CL125 truck last year and it has been his labour of love to restore the vehicle and give it the original green livery of his father, Daniel T Galt.

Now the Galt family plans to use the Albion CL125 in photo shoots with some of the latest additions to the company's fleet of vehicles, including one with a special platinum 70th anniversary wrap.

Mr Galt said: "We have enjoyed a long-established relationship with Morris Lubricants and use a variety of their products including engine oil, gearbox oils and greases across our modern, mixed fleet of over 60 vehicles and 100 trailers. Morris was therefore a natural choice for us when restoring the Albion."

The Shrewsbury-based business was happy to help with the restoration project. The Albion CL125 uses Golden Film SAE 30 Classic Motor Oil, which is recommended for use in veteran, classic and vintage cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles and tractors, where engine design and tolerances prohibit the use of modern multigrade, high additive level oils.

In addition, the company also



The restored 1937
Albion CL125
lorry.

provided Superclean Motortune petrol treatment, an advanced fuel additive designed to clean and maintain petrol engine fuel systems.

The haulage company, which has been owned by the Galt family since 1947, offers a wide range of transport and logistical solutions with its fleet of 60 trucks and 100 trailers at four operating centres across Central Scotland, with services including lorry mounted crane hire, container lift, storage, distribution and driver training.

Galt Transport was founded by Daniel T Galt in 1947 with four vehicles and a horse and cart providing a direct next day service from Glasgow's quaysides to Dumbarton, Alexandria and Balloch.

Twenty years later, his son Allan joined the company and grew the business and today, Allan's son, Andrew, runs operations, while daughter Linda is marketing and business development manager.

The company has been founded on a willingness to diversify and provide innovative transport solutions to customers.

Morris Lubricants' area sales manager for Northern England and Scotland, Steve Brownless, said: "There is always a deep satisfaction in being able to offer long standing customers lubricants to meet the demanding requirements of their newest fleet, but also to support the heritage that enabled them to become one of the best known and respected families in the business."

HARVEY RAMMOND (1934-2017)

Heritage Commercials reader, Harvey Rammond, was taken on his final journey to Shepton Mallet Crematorium by Vintage Lorry Funerals 1950 Leyland Beaver.

Harvey was born in Barnet and attended the Elizabeth Allen School in the North London town. His National Service from 1953 to 1956 was spent in Hong Kong as a Gunner with the Royal Artillery on Stone Cutter Island.

On leaving the Army, Harvey drove tippers for Pannels of Golders Green delivering sand and gravel to building sites and tarmac for road building projects. In the late 1960s he started to deliver safes nationwide for Stratford Safes and then John Tann High Security Safes in Borehamwood.

In the late 1970s Harvey moved to Wells

in Somerset where he worked as a Lorry Driver for W C B Clares Limited, delivering supermarket shopping trolleys to depots throughout Britain, however, Harvey normally was given the London runs as he had an excellent knowledge of the roads in the capital.

Harvey retired when he was 65 years old and he spent his time fishing and looking after the plants in his garden. He also liked to spend as much time as he could with his grandchildren.

Harvey is deeply missed by June, his wife, and their children Mark and Karen, four grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

If you want to know more about the activities of the 1950 Leyland Beaver then visit www.vintagelorryfunerals.co.uk or phone 01225 865346.



Llandudno Transport Festival

This year sees the 25th anniversary of the superb Llandudno Transport Festival held, as always, on the early May Bank Holiday weekend, which this year is the 29th & 30th of April and the 1st of May. The venue is Bodafon Field on Llandudno Seafront Showground, North Wales LL30 1BW. Gates open from 9am to 5pm daily with the Shuttle Bus Service to Town starting at 10am.

As a measure of its popularity all entries

are now full. The first time out renovations and commercials entry numbers around 150 vehicles, plus 100 light commercials, military vehicles, fire engines, buses, Welsh Mods [Modern Class], tractors, motorcycles and classic cars. In addition there will be over 100 Trade and Autojumble Stands.

After two years of bad weather, the event will once again be hoping to resume the evening Road Runs once again. These will start on Saturday at around 6pm

from the Showground, and on Sunday at approximately 6pm will be the start of the Great Orme Marine Drive run. Buses will run from the stop outside the main gate for anyone wishing to go to Conwy at the same time.

Information can be found on the website www.llantransfest.co.uk and also with a SAE to Llandudno Transport Festival, 48 Church Road, Rhos on Sea, Colwyn Bay, CONWY, LL28 4YS.



Just some of the fantastic commercials on display at previous Llandudno Transport Festivals. Photos Andrew Mytton.

SEALEY SPRING PROMOTION

Sealey have launched their new 68 page Spring Promotion which is packed with over 700 deals of their most popular tools & equipment and also features over 70 new lines and discounts of up to 56% off list price.

The promotion includes a range of Jacking & Lifting equipment, Power Tools, Hand Tools, Vehicle Service Tools, Safety equipment, Janitorial products and Consumables, to name but a few.

Also featured within the Spring promotion is Sealey's New ASC50 which they have added to their range of High Level Commercial Vehicle Support Stands. The support stands come supplied with three interchangeable crutches which provide an even load distribution for added stability. These units also feature captive, spring assisted, multi-position pin load support and castors for easy manoeuvrability making them ideal for use with commercial vehicles.

Copies of the Spring Promotion are available from your local stockist, or you can view or request a copy online at www.sealey.co.uk



Events for April 2017

Visitors are advised to contact the event organisers prior to travelling. We cannot be held responsible for errors in this listing.

2 April SPRING ROAD RUN

Start at Warminster Central Car Park, Wiltshire BA12 9AD
Organised by: Commercial Transport In Preservation Ltd Tel: 01747 823365
Website: www.thectp.org.uk

6-9 April GREAT NORTH STEAM FAIR

Beamish Museum, Beamish, Stanley, Co Durham DH9 0RG
Tel: 0191 3704000
Website: www.beamish.org.uk

15-16 April 19TH CLASSIC COMMERCIAL VEHICLE RALLY

Kirkby Stephen and Brough, Cumbria CA17 4QN
Tel: 01536 23254 Website: www.facebook.com/edenclassicvehiclegroup

16 April TRANSPORT FESTIVAL

Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, Whisby Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 3QT
Tel: 01522 500566
Website: www.lvvs.org.uk

22-23 April SANDBACH TRANSPORT FESTIVAL

The Commons, Sandbach Town Centre, Cheshire CW11 1EG
Tel: 01270 766238
Website: www.sandbachtransportfestival.co.uk

23 April ALL FORDS CLASSIC SHOW

The British Commercial Vehicle Museum, King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LE
Tel: 01772 451011
Website: www.britishcommercialvehiclemuseum.com

29 April EMERGENCY SERVICE VEHICLES DAY

Abbey Pumping Station Museum, Corporation Road, Leicester LE4 5PX
Tel: 01162 995113
Website: www.abbeypumpingstation.org

30 April THE CHESHIRE RUN

Onslow Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 5EE
Tel: 01743 792731
Website: www.shrewsburysteamrally.co.uk

30 April-1 May TRUCKFEST PETERBOROUGH

East of England Showground, Alwalton, Peterborough, Cambs PE2 6XE
Tel: 01775 768661
Website: www.livepromotions.co.uk

J&A Smith Ltd

I am a fan of J&A Smith Ltd, Maddiston, Lanc and have built various models of Smith's vehicles and read as much history of the firm as I can find. My interest began in 1964 when I started work, and my journey by bus passed the depot used by Smith's in St Albans, and I used to see their lorries

leaving on their runs back up north. I know the firm started around 1931 with one lorry on coal haulage but I cannot find any information on when they ceased trading - or were taken over by another group? I wondered if some of your knowledgeable contributors, maybe the Scottish ones,

can help with a date/year. Keep up the good work, I look forward to Heritage Commercial dropping though the letterbox each month.

David Bray
Via email

Out and about

Whilst I am into trucks of all ages, makes and models I have a particular soft spot for ERFs and Fodens. Attached are an example of each which I noted at Birch Services, still showing that they are capable of doing a decent days work. The Foden was snapped on the Westbound side on 22nd

February 2017 as she made a stop for fuel before heading off on her next job. The ERF of J Barrett is a local truck based in Oldham and I snapped this on the Eastbound side as she took a breather on 2nd March 2017.

Whilst the Foden isn't as old as the ERF, every example that I see I simply have to try and photograph, as the working examples are getting rarer and to me are classics in their own right, this particular truck now

being around 15 years old.

Also attached is a photo of a Volvo FM7 which I snapped at Charnock Richard on 22nd February 2017. Judging by the shape of the covered body it would suggest that this truck spends the bulk of its time carrying steel products.

Chris Newton
Via email



GOOD MORNING FROM CANADA

I am writing you on behalf of my father, Dennis Young, who was a truck driver in the Second World War in Peacehaven on the south coast of England. For any of his mates that are still alive it would be nice to hear from you. Anyway, the recent article in HC about logging on the coast of British Columbia brought back memories for Dad and myself. He ran the repair shop in a place called Nekite River and Wakeman Sound for British Columbia Forest Products. He ran those large Hayes HDX in the camp with Detroit Diesel V-12s and Allison 5960 automatic transmissions. Those trucks hauled many a load to the dumping ground

to offload, and one thing that struck was one day in the camp, while I was visiting, the HDX came through with only three logs on the load. But they were the biggest logs I had ever seen and I think they were around 100 tons for three trees.

I worked for Detroit Diesel at the time, and repaired many a V-12-71 series engine. The coast was quite a wild place to fly in and out of the camps.

The main reason I am writing is to tell you that he enjoys the magazine. He grew up in an era that was a tough time for England but it brings back memories of his driving on the south coast around Peacehaven, Brighton,

Saltdean and Newhaven. He worked for his uncle at a store called Poplett's in Peacehaven.

For any readers that can remember my father they can e-mail me at sonofstrat@gmail.com

Thanks for a great magazine that shows a lot about trucking in England. I find it interesting as I worked on Kenworths, Peterbilts, Navistar, Freightliner and the odd Mercedes that were used around Vancouver many years ago.

Keep up the good work

Roger Young
Via email

HC MARCH 2017

What a wonderful account of a person on the road delivering our food stuff etc., in this month's HC. Thank you 'Reynard'!

On the front of the magazine there is a photo of an O Series Bedford. Can anybody tell me if the Austin K Series used the same cab, and who manufactured it?

On page 14 the Reverend Lines referred to Hall & Co - they had two makes of vehicles that caused trouble. The first was the Guy Warrior that came out on 900 x 20 tyres. When loaded it was found that the front tyres and axle were overloaded, so they changed the front tyres to 1100 x 20 to increase the tyre weight and to put more onto the back of the vehicle. This is why it looked it had its nose up in the air.

The other one was the Foden eight-wheeler tanker with a two-stroke engine used for bulk cement. This had water problems because it was pumping cement up into high silos. They put overseas radiators on them but this did not work. They also changed the material in the heads many times but with no luck. In the end all Halls discharge Fodens had gun metal cylinder heads.

A bit more useless information!

Derek Emblen
Via email.

Hello Derek. You may think it's useless, but it's just the sort of memories I love! Please keep them coming! - Ed.

Aussie rules

With regard to your recent comment about road tax, here's a note to let you know what happens in New South Wales with registration renewal. First of all, about two months before the car registration is due for renewal, you receive both a paper document from the Roads and Traffic Authority (or Roads and Maritime Service as they call themselves now), and an email notification if you are on the internet, telling you when the vehicle registration is due.

If you fail to renew the registration and continue to drive after the due date, then you will get caught, as all police cars in New South Wales (and I think in other states as well) - have a number plate recognition device fitted. These are connected via satellite, and can read six number plates a second.

The no tax disk only applies to light vehicles, all heavy vehicles still have to have a tax disk, or in our case a transfer that sticks to the windscreen.

As well, all heavy vehicles are subject not only to an annual inspection they can also be inspected at the roadside at any time. A favourite place for the police and RTA to do these inspections is around the roads near the wharves (docks).

This happens even at night.

I have been pulled up by the police after leaving the wharves, and 'escorted' to the checking station so my truck could be checked by RTA personnel. This includes not only a road worthy check, but also a weight check, and a check on the owner/company and, of course, a full license check, even though the police officer had looked at my license when he pulled me over.

I almost missed my next time slot at the wharf after being delayed at the checking station one night.

I have now retired and I do not miss that aspect of driving a heavy vehicle one little bit!

Peter Cunningham.
New South Wales, Australia.

A CRUSADER'S OTHER PAST

After reading Bob Tuck's letter in the March edition of Heritage Commercials I thought you might like to see a picture that I took of the Scammell a couple of years before you. Same format but not then painted.

Jim King, Via email



JENSEN LIGHTWEIGHT



I have just finished reading another superb edition of *Heritage Commercials* (March 2017 issue)

It was great to see photos of the Jensen Lightweight that was restored by my friend Ray Horton during the early 1990s at a time that I was able to offer free labour cleaning and painting all of the steel rivets in the chassis!

I have attached a photo of Ray standing next to the rolling chassis in about 1990.

His previous restoration was the Diamond T (pictured) that he completed in about 1971 and continued to show even after completing the Jensen.

The reason for the signwriting 'Distinct Rarity' was that it was the title of the article in (I believe) *Motor Transport* in about 1975/76 advertising the Jensen as needing a new home. The reason why it was a distinct rarity was that it was one of the exhibits at the South Bank Exhibition of the 1951 Festival of Britain, after which it was sold by the then Jensen dealer, Ferraris of Cricklewood.

I was determined to find a photo of



the Jensen on display, as it was such a big exhibition, but my searches at the National Newspaper Archive at Colindale in the early 90s proved fruitless, but I did have success at the Public Record Office at Kew, which holds hundreds of boxes of information on the Festival (which back in 1992 were all on card index records) which is where I obtained a monochrome photo of the Jensen (the street lamp displayed next to it is one of a number made by Revo of Tipton - very close to the West Bromwich base of Jensen).

It was nice to see that Ray's Jensen is safe in the custody of David Roberts-Malpass (although I think it looks much better with the sides in place).



Did anyone else notice that the Commer article on page 18 of the same issue - at the motor museum on the Isle of Man - is signwritten 'David Roberts-Malpass'? It was great to see more local trucks in the article on Scammell by Mark Gredzinski - who could fail to remember the Corona pop man coming around each week? The company I work for have worked with Doyle Demolition in the past too. Somewhere in his archives I believe Mark has photos that he took one Saturday morning in about 1988 in my father's yard (WJ Jenkins & Sons (Tipton) Ltd) - I hope he manages to sneak some of their small fleet into future issues, as although I have nothing to do with the business it is still operating (run by my cousin Nigel Jenkins and his father Brian - my late father's youngest brother). The firm was founded in 1890 by my great great grandfather with a single horse when he was almost 60 years of age.

I look forward to reading future issues.

Andy Jenkins
Via email

LEYLAND'S 0680

I have just read Mr Hall's letter about Leyland's 0680 diesel engine in the December 2016 issue of *Heritage Commercials*, and I have to say that it is he who needs correcting. Leyland introduced the 11.1-litre 0680 engine in 1951, because many overseas customers were asking for more power. Probably the first to be used for road vehicles were in the export bus chassis called the 'Worldmaster'. Certainly they were offered as an option to the 9.8-litre 0600 engine in the Hippo and Octopus from 1952, and also in the Beaver and bus models from 1954.

There is a better photo of Fellsides Beaver, reg YRM 370, in Graham Edge's book on Leyland Beavers, and it appears to be a perfectly standard tractor unit. I would suggest that Mr Hall may be getting confused with the 11.1-litre P680 engine, which was announced at the 1960 Earles Court Motor Show for the new Power-Plus range. These gave 200bhp against the 0680's maximum of 150.

Eric J Muckley,
Leyland Society Founder Member,
Warrington.

AN UNUSUAL SCAMMELL

I was born in Watford in 1946. An avid train spotter as a child, I would see the Scammell Mechanical Horses going to and from Watford Junction that was a major freight depot back then.

In 1962 I left school to begin an apprenticeship at a company on Whippedell Road. My sister lived in West Watford, so I frequently walked past the Scammell works on Tolpits Lane.

One afternoon in the mid 1960s I saw an odd vehicle leave the factory for a road test. It was in desert camouflage with three axles, but the odd thing was the wheels were offset by about six inches, and the vehicle lurched along the road, presumably simulating a rocky path.

Move forward over 60 years and I now live in California. The nearest thing to a truck I own is a 29ft RV based on a Ford E350 with a 7.5-litre V8 engine. Driving it with the armchair comfort, with air con and cruise control set, it's light years away from the vehicles I love reading about in this magazine!

Geoff Tanner
Tujunga, California.

My first wagon

The first wagon I legally drove on the road was a Foden four-wheeler, 14 tons gross with a Gardner 5LW engine and seven-speed gearbox. This was in 1968 when I was 21 years old. This was my first job on my first day at British Soda. I was to go with the lorry's regular driver, Noel Evens, to take a load to Grimsby. The route taken was Buxton, Chesterfield, Gainsborough, and then on to Grimsby. Noel drove the wagon loaded, and I drove the empty wagon home to Sandbach. There were a few missed gear-changes from me, but we got there!

I said 'legally' earlier because I drove a few while under age. This is a list of some of the lorries I drove. AEC Mk5 eight-wheeler caustic soda tanker, empty. This was from Junction 19 to Junction 18 of the M6, and I only drove this once. AEC Mercury artic. Albion tilt-cab four-wheeler, Commer six-wheeler flat (two-stroke). I made several deliveries to Smithfield Market, London, with these lorries on Sunday nights, and I'd



be back home by 6am. I then did a full shift at Fodens in the paint shop, starting at 8am.

These jobs were to get experience behind the wheel. What you can do when you're young!

One day I was in the yard at British Soda and a man from the Ministry came to see me. He asked a few questions and then went away. Unknown to me, these wagons

had not got 'A' licences, so you get the picture.

There was a court case, but I didn't hear any more about it. These were the 'good old days'.

Dave Norbury
Sandbach,
Cheshire.

DID IT SURVIVE?

I took this photo back in the early 90s/late 80s. Hewson & Robinson were at the junction of Sutton Lane and Hull Road, between Wilberfoss and Barmby Moor, York, on the opposite side of the road from Jimmy Johnson's old yard, and maybe half a mile further toward Pocklington. Apologies for the quality, the negative is water damaged, and the scanner old.

I was told that this recovery vehicle was a 1944 Federal 6x6, re-engined with an early Magirus Deutz motor. I remember seeing it on the move occasionally in the York area, often at some speed - whatever it was



fitted with did not lack a bit of power! Then in the mid 1990s, I stopped seeing it at all. I've no idea where it went, but know it was getting rougher every time I saw it, so worried it might have been scrapped.

There used to be a 1950s Leyland

Martian sat behind a farm opposite New Mill at Seaton Ross, motionless but not in as poor shape. That too disappeared, till I found it years later parked outside a chippy in Pocklington, maybe the summer of 2014, as the then owner was taking it out for a spin before handing it on to a new one.

I only hope the recovery lorry met the same fate, but I really do not know. I never saw it in Johnsons yard, and I've not heard of it elsewhere either, and am now long out of touch with such things.

Any ideas anyone?

Allan Smith
Via email.

A TALE OF TWO SAURERS

Great article in the March 2017 issue of HC about Laurent Dircks, his two Saurers and his DAF. I remember back in 1970 my then girlfriend and I drove to Austria and it was great to see Saurers, Graf Und Stift, Berna and even MAN back then, as they were not imported here until '73. Another was of course Steyr. What with the lovely scenery, food, and all these great trucks, it was brilliant - although the girlfriend did not appreciate me spending so much time looking at truck yards when she wanted to go off exploring. Another truck that it was nice to see was Bussing with that unusual engine layout. I was in my element and it was a great trip. Only

saw today a photo of an abandoned Berna out in Gambia.

The girlfriend and I did marry two years later and were together twenty three years but I think my truck interest got to her in the end, and she could not stand it anymore and left me. But my second wife seems to be able to "put up with it", although sometimes it gets to her but it's better than chasing other women!

Keep up the good work. You have had some really interesting letters in your letter column lately.

Trevor G Jones
Via email.





Firstly, I'd like to tell Mark Gredzinski how much I enjoy his photos. I can really relate to them! The one's in the November 2016 issue that really hit a chord, as he is at the heart of the Midlands, which seems to me to be completely ignored by other magazines. On reflection, in over a decade of reading 'Classic and Vintage Commercials', I never seemed to bond...

Back to the November 2016 issue, 'It pays to advertise', the Jensen. Trevor, who comes with me shows etc., got it into his heart that he wanted an old lorry. He used to be a lorry driver, and his son drives a unit. Trevor is 81 years old, and has sold his classic car, and missed his last season. I met him a few years ago at a small village show. He teamed up with me in 2016. Last September I went with him to Kent to look at a Dennis. No go. After a couple of sorties on his own he got me to go to Stockport with him, to K&R Walsh Bros. They had a beaver-tailed Ford D Series for sale, but I managed to talk him out of it as it had no power steering. In fact, I have talked him out of the idea completely.

K&R Walsh turn out some really good work, and it was a privilege to visit them. However, it was Manchester, so it never stopped raining!

The factory estate we visited was massive.

I have been to many, but this was the biggest. I asked one of the Walsh brothers what it had been, and he told me it was where they made Avro Lancaster bombers during the Second World War. What a heritage gone! I could imagine a bomber taxiing down the wide roadway.

There was still a military presence on the other side of the security fencing. But what a massive site! Kynock ICI was a huge site, but it never had the buildings and workshops like this, with large slanting roofs, and long avenues. The factory workers' homes were outside. It must have been a mass of people at shift change time, during the war and after. My imagination runs away, our heritage.

The BRD site is only a mile from where I live. It was a big blow to the local people when it closed. There are second, third and fourth generation people who live here. They have never witnessed the destruction of the inner cities, such as Birmingham. They are still called 'villages', Runfall - Shellfield, Pellsall, Brownhills... So much for nostalgia, we are only locally connected to Walsall.

Looking at the photo again of the Jensen on the back on the trailer, you can see the unit has all the room it needs to turn around. No fighting for space!

You can imagine a Lancaster bomber on the concrete. There must be photos or documents of this area during the war, but I've never seen any. How did the aircraft leave the factory? Was there an airfield? Manchester airport perhaps, or did they leave by road?

One final item - another kick in the teeth. To speed things up I gave the wife £3 to get the enclosed five photocopies. They can't be more than 50-60p each, I thought. But when she gave them to me with the bill it was £12.50! That's never right, and I shall query it next time I go into Walsall.

Anyway, here's a few photos from my travels. Picture one shows 'Sue' in the cab in front of the entrance to an event. The next photos show the 900 x 20 tyres and two heavy-duty tarpaulin sheets and a Bedford TK front bumper bar. The next is a Firmin AEC. The next photo shows us unloading the tyres in the auction yard. The final but one photo is the Bedford with 'The Percy Thrower Garden Centre' written in the doors. Younger readers may say 'who's Percy Thrower?' A real blast from the past!

I have also included a photo of the Dennis in Kent. Did it find a good home?

Tony Hill



AN ERF FIRST

I am writing regarding the letter on page 15 of the March issue from JB Simm from Crewe about the ERF. He is right about it being parked up in a farm building, and it is just across the road from the Broughton Arms on the Newcastle to Crewe Road. I have been past today (19/2/2017) it looks in a very sorry state, with paint fading after standing for over 20 years. I understand from a friend of mine that used drive it that it has had quite a lot bits taken off and sold over the years. From what he was saying there has also been a lot of people trying to buy it over the years to restore and show it, but the owner will not sell it.

M E Bona, Nantwich.

Always glad to help

I am making an enquiry as to whether Heritage Commercials has ever featured any articles on Army recovery vehicles. In addition, do you have a contact address for the AEC Society?

K Iles, Westgate on Sea, Kent

Thanks for getting in touch. Over the years we've featured military recovery vehicles many times. The most relevant to you would be a two part article featured in the December 2015 and January 2016 issues. These can be bought via the Kelsey back issues website - shop.kelsey.co.uk/hcm

For the AEC Society you'd have to go to the website: www.aecsociety.com All the best - Ed.



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Wreck RESCUE

The January 2016 issue of *Heritage Commercials* featured the story of Roger Mortimore's DAF 2400 'Restoration that Never Was.' But recently Roger has been involved with the early stages of a new project and this could well be viewed as the 'Restoration that Certainly Will Be!'



The Crusader in Jack Schofield's yard. Photo Glen May.



The lorry ready for collection. Photo Glen May.

Apparently the news that Roger's 'Spring Cleaning' had created some space in the small yard surrounding his workshop had begun to spread. His wife Margaret was beginning to become accustomed to the unfamiliar wide open spaces in the back garden. However, any plans for a few more shrubs and perhaps some flowers were soon put on hold as Roger mentioned that had apparently opened a 'home' for itinerant Crusaders, or perhaps more accurately some temporary accommodation for a Scammell Crusader that had certainly seen better days and would soon be on its way to Germany.

The proud owner of the Crusader is Glen May, who lives with his wife, Judith, and daughter, Emilie, just to the south of Munich and who had arranged to buy the Scammell from Jack Schofield towards the end of last year. Jack still has two of his Crusader's in regular use but also has a number of others parked up in his yard which he has acquired over the years.

I asked Glen about his interest in lorries and what had prompted him to buy the Crusader. "I have always liked lorries as far

back as I can remember and my first one was an 18th birthday present. I took my HGV when I was a student and some driving jobs during that time helped to pay for my studies. I spent four years driving lorries, two on agency work and another two on tippers. Most of my agency work involved driving for Whitbreads in Kentish Town and I loved every minute."

"The Austin which was my birthday present had been a horsebox and had only done around 26,000 miles but when I bought it the cab was completely rotten. Come to think of it that first lorry had a lot in common with the Crusader cab, which is just as rotten. While searching around for some replacement parts I met a great guy called Di Oliver who at the time was breaking light lorries for export, mainly Terriers, Boxers and Ford D Series. I started working for him during my summer holidays and in return he arranged for me to learn the 'dark art' of welding. He left the actual teaching to a fantastic Polish guy called Jack and we worked on my Austin, welding up one half of the cab together while I did the other half by myself."





Jack's Crusader was used to push Glen's lorry onto the low loader. *Photo Glen May.*

WEDDING TRANSPORT

"Mainly due to lack of money the work on the Austin took several years but it was finally completed in 1999 just in time for my mate's wedding. I was pleased with the way the lorry had turned out although flat out at 35mph on the M25 was a little scary. Sadly I had to part with the lorry when I moved to Germany and I sold it to a chap in Anglesey who was into tractors. I didn't sell it for very much as it was not really finished as the body needed some of the woodwork replacing and there was still work to do on the cab. However I will always have a soft spot for 8393 CR and I wonder where she is now."

"The Austin was followed by a couple of 'soft restorations', a 1965 Series IIA Land Rover which I have now had for 23 years, a 1974 Mercedes Coupe which I used to run around in when I moved to Germany and is now getting the attention it deserves, and there is also a Series One Land Rover on my 'to do' list. There is enough work to keep me occupied for a while so why on earth did I buy a Crusader?"

"My parents have recently moved to Kent and live only a field away from Roger's place. On a visit last summer I was out walking the dog and spotted the yard with its old lorries which was a 'red rag to a bull', and as Roger

was out in his yard I struck up a conversation - well it would have been rude not to. The lorry talk turned to Crusaders which I have always liked and I casually mentioned that I was planning to get one of my own when I reached the grand old age of 45. By that time I thought that I would have completed the work on the Mercedes and the Land Rover."

"I was looking for a left-hooker, four-wheeler that did not need masses of work. I know that there are quite a few six-wheelers about but the four-wheelers seem to be very thin on the ground and quite pricey, and I certainly didn't have 20K to spare. Roger used a Crusader in his haulage business for many



Peter Denham took the Scammell to Kent with his Freightliner.



Roger and Glen with the new arrival.





◀ Glen in the cab. He looks happy with his purchase!

▶ Pushing the new arrival into the yard.

▼ Roger's S26 pulls the Crusader off the low loader.



The green moss was rather fetching!

years and it is still in his shed today. However Roger's next move came as something of a surprise as he launched into a hunt for a suitable vehicle almost immediately. A few emails came and went, there were Amazons at 20K, and a few ex military vehicles but they were not what I was looking for. Then I received an email while I was on a family holiday in the north east of England advising that there were not one but five four-wheelers for sale at Retford, not too far from where we were spending the holiday."

"The vehicles were being sold by showman, Jack Schofield, and I lost no time in telephoning him to talk about the Crusaders and from our conversation it sounded like one of them was exactly what I was looking for, a four-wheeler, a bit rough but complete and the price was right. I arranged to have a look at the lorry and although it was stuck behind a trailer in the yard and I could not get a detailed look at it a deal was agreed."

FANTASTIC FREIGHTLINER

"I had come over from Germany for a few days at the beginning of January to handle the arrangements for the first part of the Crusader's journey back to Munich. Peter Denham, a friend of Roger's, had agreed to bring the Scammell to Kent, where Roger had kindly offered to provide 'bed and breakfast' for the lorry. On the Saturday morning I was greeted

by the sight of Peter's fantastic Freightliner and low loader waiting for me outside my hotel. Not only was I going to pick up my own British Classic but I was getting to ride in an American Classic as well - it was Christmas all over again. This had all the makings of being a very good day indeed."

"Having arrived at Jack's place we fired up his own Crusader and this was used to push mine on to the trailer. Sitting in the driver's seat for the first time I was looking down on the bar when the first shunt showered me in rust and rat poo - this is obviously the glamorous bit about classic vehicle restoration! Nevertheless we got it nice and straight on the trailer and strapped it down ready for the journey south. Having been underway for about twenty minutes we stopped to check that the load was secure and found what looked like ton of rust flakes from the Crusader on the bed of the trailer. Well, that would save me having to remove them later!"

"The trip down the A1, the M11 and M25 down to Kent passed without incident apart from me sitting there with a permanent grin on my face and constantly opening the window to listen to the 350 Cummins beating away. A wonderful experience, especially Peter's use of the Jake brake as we came over the bridge at Dartford. By early afternoon the Freightliner with its sheeted Crusader load was 'cluttering up' the main road outside Roger's house where

my Dad and my young niece, Trudy, had come to watch the great unload."

"Then came the 'tricky bit' - offloading the Scammell in the narrow access lane to the yard, but before that it was time for tea and bacon sandwiches which Margaret had kindly prepared. That could have put an end to activities for the day, with hot tea and a cosy warm living room and some good banter and 'lorry chat' making the time pass quickly. However we managed to rouse ourselves before the sun set and it got too dark to unload the Crusader."

I had come along in my capacity as an 'observer' to take a few snaps of the proceedings on what was a cold but pleasant winter's afternoon. With the sheet removed the Crusader was revealed in all its green glory, green being not only the colour of the main paintwork but also the large patches of moss which were adorning the top of the fuel tank and the fifth wheel mounting. Jack had said that this was the best of the Crusader's in the yard and if true I hate to think what the others are like. However Glen seemed more than happy with his new lorry and had a huge grin on his face as he managed to open the cab door and get inside. Having been parked up outside for several years and with a hole in the roof, the weather had not been too kind and the interior was going to need rather more work than a sweep out with a dustpan and brush.



The end of day one and the Crusader is finally in position.



Day two and Glen starts work with the pressure washer.



Glen's dad helping to change the oil and filters.



The cab interior certainly needs work.



There are quite a few holes in the cab roof.



It came off in my hand officer!

INITIAL CLEAN-UP

Roger used his Scammell S26 and push pole the Crusader into the yard where in the gathering gloom it was left until the next morning. Glen returned early the next day to give the lorry a thorough power wash to remove the worst of the dirt, loose rust, mould and moss, (shame I rather liked the moss), before the Scammell was pushed into the workshop. Glen had a couple of days before he was due to return to his home in Munich and planned to spend some time tinkering before he had to leave the Scammell.

Glen continued; "After the clean and tidy up the full horror of the task to restore the Crusader became apparent. The interior has been totally trashed due to a corroded roof and a 'rodent housing development'. It had been difficult to really inspect the driver's side at the point of sale due to access difficulties but I had judged the condition on the passenger side. This in hindsight was an error as not only are the floors gone but the throttle pedal, brake pedal and brake valve



Roger and Glen working on the wiring.

are totally corroded. Clearly the leaky roof and the 'A' pillar were pooling water in that area. It was becoming clear that the whole of the driver's side door aperture, 'A' pillar and surround will have to be rebuilt. Just for good measure everything in the cab is either seized, corroded, warped or generally trashed."

I returned the following day to find Glen and Roger trying to 'decipher' the wiring, and their investigations had confirmed that the Crusader had originally been paired with a tanker trailer and was wired accordingly. As a rust covered Glen told me; "I thought that trying to start the Rolls-Royce engine would give the spirits a boost after the depression over the state of the cab from the previous day. However after 12 years of standing, and it being the middle of winter, I didn't hold out much hope but the oils and filters were changed and then we tried to find out why we could not get any ignition."

"There was power in the key but nothing to the dash and tracing the wiring established that it has an insulated return,

which means more wiring 'spaghetti' than an Italian restaurant. Around 11am Roger suggested bypassing the lot and going straight off the solenoid but I continued to puzzle over the 'rats maze' of wires coming off the starter motor and heading to the front of the lorry before disappearing under the dash. By lunchtime I had started to get the hump and the fate of the Crusader was beginning to look bleak, and Roger's son suggestion of putting a match to it seemed like a good idea."

FLYING SPARKS

"However, with the inner man fortified by an excellent lunch which had been prepared by Margaret, testing continued with occasional flying sparks and more rust down the back of my neck. Around 2pm I decided to bypass everything and go straight to the solenoid, an idea which Roger then reminded me he had made some three hours earlier. I rigged a wire to the battery, pulled off the air filter hose just in case it fired and then ran away on its own turbo oil, as without the air filter hose in place I could shove a block of wood over the inlet and starve it of air to stop the engine."

"Fuel was another issue but that was solved by disconnecting the fuel pipe and using a gravity feed from a can of diesel perched on the cab seat. With a switch wired in and the battery connected we went for the start and much to everyone's surprise it coughed on the first turn then boomed into life with a cloud of smoke. Both the engine and the turbo sounded like they are in rude health but without having any water in the lorry it meant that we did not run the engine for very long."

As I photographed the start up, clouds of

fumes soon filled the shed and billowed out into the garden, but the grin on Glen's face said it all - the Scammell was a runner and that was a fine way to end the first stage of the project.

As Glen said; "Well, the next step is to shut the door and go down the pub. My basic plan, once the Crusader is back home is to focus firstly on the cab. This will be stripped and either welded and repaired or replaced by a donor cab if one can be found. Once the work on the cab is finished I will move on to the chassis and the running gear, stripping, shotblasting and painting the chassis. The engine and gearbox will be serviced and painted. Then there will be the braking system to be overhauled with pipes and valves being repaired or replaced where necessary. Once that lot is done the cab will be painted, not decided on a colour as yet, then the interior will be re-furbished using a mix of new and secondhand parts. I know a few people who have some trim parts so I should be able to lay my hands on what I need without too much difficulty. As for the timescale, well that is up in the air as my family take precedence and my job is pretty demanding and involves lots of travel, so I will probably only have one or two Saturdays each month. This means around three years at least for the cab work alone so I may not get my Crusader by the time I am 45 - at least not a roadworthy one. The work will be carried out in my garage while the larger parts will be left in store in a nearby barn until needed."

TRACING THE HISTORY

"As well as the actual work on the lorry I hope to try and piece together some of its history. The plate is still in place which

identifies the Crusader as Chassis Number GHV59521, and it was registered as JVM 906V. The first owner was BEB Transport in Stockport and then I think it went to Jack via a scrapyards, so at the moment I am only the third owner. I have found one photograph of a Crusader tanker on the Internet which I believe could have been a sister lorry as the registration numbers are very close, JVM 896V, and it has the same type of sleeper cab. Perhaps more information will come to light in the future"

I certainly wish Glen well with his project - it is not every restoration that begins 700 miles from what will be its 'home' shed near Munich. For the next two or three months the Scammell will remain with Roger until transportation for the next leg of the journey can be arranged. As Glen said; "I really must thank Roger and Margaret for all their help and being so supportive, without their help and all the tea and bacon sandwiches I don't think I could undertake such a project!"

Glen certainly has a lengthy restoration on his hands and is already considering trying to track down a decent replacement cab, as the original really is in rather a bad state. However he has promised to keep Roger and me up to date with the work and although he has not fixed a deadline he is keen to get the Crusader back on the road as quickly as time and money permit.

My thanks to Roger and Glen for introducing me to some of the 'finer' points of lorry restoration which seem to involve several lengths of wire, lots of sparks and some really bad language, and also the art getting rust down the neck. Thanks also to Margaret for providing the most welcome refreshments. ♦



The Rolls-Royce engine fires into life.



Glen telling everyone that the Crusader lives!



Mechanical Horse

Mike & Julie Blenkinsop continue their look into the history of the ubiquitous 'Mechanical Horse'.

Part
2

There were, in fact, two distinct three-wheeled 'mechanical horses', the Karrier and Scammell early utility models, and then the later Scammell Scarab design. The early Scammells were similar in looks to the Karrier, but where the Karrier's nose covered the front wheel up to driver's eye level, the Scammell front wheel was covered only by a piece of bodywork just enveloping the wheel housing itself. A piece of bent steel protected the front wheel housing from impact. Built from 1933-47 and pulling either a 3- or 6-ton trailer, these were designated as MH3 or MH6, while power was in the form of a side-valve petrol engine, which developed up to 54bhp, through a three-speed plus reverse box. 20,000 came off the assembly lines over 16 years, nearly all tractors, but a few hundred were built

as rigids, mainly for the armed services. Early models were built with open cab sides with only a piece of canvas cloth to keep the weather out; later models did have the luxury of doors. However the Scammell MH range didn't have an electric starter, always depending on the swing of the handle to start the engine.

Some rigid-chassis sales were made as the basis for fire tenders; others as Chelsea-style refuse lorries. The British Commercial Vehicle Museum at Leyland has an excellent 6-ton example of the early Scammell mechanical horse which was restored by Scammell apprentices in 1981. It had survived mainly because of its role as a tug-towing tractor delivering parts around the Tolpits Lane factory. The Leyland Museum was also the source of parts for David Warren's Scarab,

featured here, as the original cab was really rust-holed, so a half-decent cab structure was located at the BCVM.

These 'horses' were not quick; top speed was around 18 mph, but that didn't stop the speed police in Bolton, Lancashire from sending a 1948 Mechanical Horse enthusiast, a speeding ticket for 44 mph, although a Belgian motorist with an identical number, but on a Belgian plate, was the real culprit!

Our iconic Scarab was one of over 13,000 built, mainly for the railway companies, introduced at the 1948 Commercial Vehicle Show and rated at 6-tons with an engine producing 45bhp, while the earlier, less powerful 3-tonner turned out 25bhp. Initially, it was launched with an 1,125cc petrol engine powering the three-tonner with a bigger side-valve, 2,043cc engine in the six-tonner. This



Reversing carefully into his designated spot in Bents Park at the end of the run, the trailer carries two spare wheels for the different sizes of tractor and trailer.



Owned now for more than twelve years, the Scarab has become part of David Warren's family.



Its 1964 'B' suffix plate hides its 1958 vintage; note the single headlamp and horse logo.

was later changed to a petrol 2,090cc engine and finally, from 1952, a diesel option was offered from Perkins, the 4.99 being fitted to the three-tonner and the P4 engine, the six-tonner, which was updated to the 4.203 engine from 1963.

What's in a name?

Researching the history of a vehicle's name is always interesting as there are usually a few theories how a name was conceived. Scarab has two main alternatives, one, that it was named after the way it scurried around the yards like a Scarab beetle, the other, which probably holds more water, is the amalgamation of the first part of Scammell and the 'back end' of one of the prized types of horse, the Arab stallion, hence Sc- arab, but will we ever really know?

In Commercial Motor of April 1955, there was a brisk trade in Mechanical Horses from London dealers. Keith and Boyle (London) Ltd of SW19, Capital Motors Company of City Road, N1 (described as a Scarab main dealer) and articulated vehicle specialists, E J Baker and company of Dorking, were offering immediate or early delivery. No prices were mentioned, although in a later advert of July 1966, a reconditioned Scarab 3-ton tractor



The Mechanical Horse six-ton tractor on display in the British Commercial Vehicle Museum in Leyland, Lancashire.

was being proffered by Capital for £375, while Rush Green Motors, who are still trading to this day at Langley, Hitchin, had an even better deal with 'one owner' 1960 three-ton Scarabs for £100 each, trailers optional.

David's Scarab had taken part in a much earlier Tyne Tees rally in a quite different form before his ownership. It had been spotted

in the 1997 run, sporting a white bonnet/upper cab and dark blue mudguards with a small blue ballast-box over its fifth-wheel. It had worked first as an artic for parts delivery at Leyland and then as a works shunter; restoration had been started in 1990 by Frank Bashford of Sunderland.

David had known the Scarab since 1994, but didn't become its owner until 2003; one of the first jobs being to tackle the construction of a new trailer brake and vacuum tank to kick-off the restoration work. Following on from that, the decision was made to make it into a tractor unit in 2011 and the hunt for parts was started. Fortunately, David had great help from Malcolm Hier, the then chairman of the Swansea Bus Museum, who had most of the spares required to rebuild the coupling mechanism.

Meanwhile, back at the Tyne-Tees rally-field, Peter Reay made himself known to us as someone who had driven a Scarab in his working life in the Newcastle area. Peter had started with British Railways on the 10th of May 1965 as a van boy, always the first step on the career ladder. Being passed as a driver in those days was a lot more informal than today, as when there was a shortfall of drivers during holidays, it gave the manager a chance to give



A period advert from 'The Commercial Motor' archive of 1955 enthusing over the lack of down-time, enjoyed by Scarab owners. Courtesy of 'The Commercial Motor' magazine.

Peter more status. On a particular Friday, Peter was asked by his manager if he would take his driving test on the following Tuesday, virtually 'out of the blue.' Taken aback, Peter had to learn how to drive in just a few days!

However, many of the full-time drivers helped him during the following three days, giving him many opportunities to drive the vehicles around the depot yards. Although Newcastle's Forth Goods Yard had been officially closed, it was still being used for bulk deliveries and provided a good open space for a young driver to practise. Peter was grateful to all the BR drivers who helped and advised him through those early days.

On that Tuesday, the British Railways examiner came up from Darlington North Road (the old station site since rebuilt into a museum) to test him. The BR driving school for the area was located at North Road and Peter passed with flying colours, which meant that he found himself out on deliveries by the Tuesday afternoon! The test vehicle was a Commer BF van, ED 2131, reg number TVY 965 - and he still remembers his 1963 Scarab, a three-tonner, 5259 DN with BR fleet number HA 6109, which he drove around the Tyneside area from August 1968, working particularly from the Westgate Road parcels office. All this, for a meagre wage, in 1965, of £4.10 shillings (£4.50p) per week to work Monday to Friday 08.00 hrs until 16.30 hrs, plus a Saturday morning shift.

Here our paths, Peter's memories and the authors' period experience collide in that we,



The English Mustard Company MHS at the British Motor Museum's classic truck weekend, Gaydon in June 2016.



As David's Scarab had been a shunter there was no Scammell coupling mechanism when rescued. Picture courtesy David Warren.



The Scammell photographed in the cobbled main street of the Beamish museum. Picture David Warren.

as commercial photographers, used to use this office a lot, probably every night, when Red Star moved in during the 1980s. It had been converted into a pick-up and drop centre for parcels by shutting down the vehicular access. We spent many unhappy hours here queuing to send our pictures off on trains all over the country. British Rail employed a particular gentleman whose role in life seemed to be to make it as hard as possible for the client to send anything, anywhere... If he could tell you that he couldn't send it for any one of a myriad reasons, he was a happy man!

Load it carefully!

Peter recalls the days earlier when there were two large open-door areas at this office for the Scarabs, used as entry and exit points. He also recalls that the trailers had to be carefully loaded as too much weight on the rear of the trailer-bed would tip it over, so it was important to balance out the weight towards the front of the vehicle.

BR Scarabs were auctioned off, at the end of their working life, at the Cooper's auction house across the road from the Westgate Road depot. Peter also recalls the dreadful



2015 and the Scarab leaves the Durham Light Infantry Museum coffee-stop on the Tyne Tees Historic Run in June 2015, before David had its trailer ready.

foot and leg cramps he experienced, as the Scarab cab was very restrictive to legs and the driving instructor's advice was to "open the door and shake your leg about a bit"!

Another safety aspect of the Scarab was the inability of the driver to know the position of the front-wheel when he climbed into the cab, as if the wheel was on hard-lock and the clutch let out, the driver could find himself completely disorientated as the vehicle shot off sideways.

To give an idea of just how prolific this little truck was, 200 Scarabs were based at a similar Red Star parcels centre at Bishopsgate in London, which closed in 1995. A lot of their work was in transferring parcels from one London terminal station to another. British Railways' workshop facilities had to be specially adapted to handle the triangular drive-line of the Scarab.

One of Peter's regular turns involved a delivery into the heart of Newcastle's business retail sector, Northumberland Street, and he described the difficulty in dropping a trailer down one of the tight



David chats to ex-British Railways Scarab driver Peter Reay.

alleyways which ran off it. However, what he particularly recalled was that Boots the Chemist had a shop on the front street which was serviced by one of the best-looking Scarabs of its day. In Boots' colours of dark green, the Scarab was a special rigid with a Luton (over the cab) box body and it was operational most days, taking deliveries into the Boots shop. Reyrolles (later Reyrolles-Parsons) of Hebburn, a heavy industry works, used grass-green liveried Scarabs internally for moving goods around their engineering shops too.

The later Scarab developed into the futuristically-styled, three-wheeled Townsman in 1966, which was followed up by the four-wheeled Standard Atlas-based artic, the Scarab Four, in a marketing attempt to carry the Mechanical Horse concept through to the next generation. It didn't work; the management appeared to want high volume sales and the project bombed. ♦

Continued next month.



The 'bull-bar' of the Scammell MH3, to protect the front wheel housing and the starting handle.



The predecessor to the Scammell Scarab; this is the late model with cab doors, seen at the Classic truck show at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon in June 2016.



During the 1950s, BRS were still using a lot of the Albion HD57 eight-wheelers and their Albion engines made a wonderful whooshing sound.

SOUNDS WONDERFUL

The modern day road-going truck is certainly far more efficient in virtually every domain when compared to its goods carrying counterpart of yesteryear. But as Bob Tuck reckons, one thing it will never hold a candle to is the sheer variety of sounds which emanate from these magnificent machines of old. Our man waxes lyrical of a time when variety was truly the spice of life.

I must confess I feel a mite sorry for the modern day truck enthusiast. True, with a click of the mouse today's anorak can 'spot' all manner of motors thanks to the sharing ability of the world-wide-web. Whether you are interested in Kenworths being worked in Kansas or are a fan of seeing Scania's in the South Island of New Zealand, then the Internet can probably supply you with all manner of options to fulfill your particular passion – and that's without leaving your desk.

When I was a youngster, I honestly thought I was the only lorry spotter in the world. Well who else would be daft enough to stand on the side of the road and quickly write numbers down in a notebook of the wagons which drove by? These were later transferred into larger volumes and although (regrettably) many of these old records have simply been

ditched as being an irrelevant pastime from my youth, one thing that hasn't been lost are the memories of the sounds from those heady days.

Yes, I know we now have the joys of U-Tube where again films of yesteryear have been saved for posterity. Those sights and sounds are certainly something special but they are no comparison to being there and breathing it all in. I suppose it's like watching things like horse-racing or even soccer on TV. With modern day camera work you can see (and hear) all the action from many different angles. But if you are so inclined to go to a see a live game or stand beside the rails when a posse of race horses thunder into life, then you'll know what I'm trying to get at. Getting up close and personal just brings the goose bumps into life.

It's thus no surprise that once you get to a certain age you hanker for the times

when memories are the strongest. Again, it's no surprise that so far as I'm concerned road transport museums are not the top of my must-go-to list. Yes, the metal may be burnished bright but it's generally just frozen in time and lacking in any sort of life.

To make my day, I'll get myself involved in a classic lorry road run. Whether it's behind the wheel; riding shotgun or simply leapfrogging around the countryside to see everyone pass by again, there is something wonderful about hearing engine sounds that were simply common place not too many years ago.

THE OFFICE DOOR

Before we get to the discourse on specific engine sounds, there is of course a huge amount to enjoy in the pre-amble to firing things into life. We were reminded about this when Gary Thompson waxed lyrical on the



▲ Once heard then you'll never forget the sound of the Commer two-stroke engine.

◀ Being worked on timber extraction, this AEC Matador hasn't had an easy life. But one of the most soothing sounds you could ask to hear is its sweet, soft sound 7.7 litre engine.

► There's something special about the creaking sound from a freshly restored Atkinson Borderer which makes the goose bumps stand up on the back of your neck.



sound of a Volvo F86 door being opened. In the feature on the fully restored William Nicol tractor unit: 'Eager Beaver' – Heritage Commercials September '16 issue – Gary told us how just hearing that sound now took him straight back to the days when he rode with his Dad in the 1970s.

I can't say that I'd ever noticed that particular F86 sound. However one thing which has always given me goose bumps of anticipation is the sound of creaking hinges from the coachbuilt cab on say the bonneted Scammell Highwayman or the similar note coming from an Atkinson Borderer door. Yes, hard to believe so much pleasure can be heard from a door opening and closing.

Climb into the cab and you'll hear the driver's seat giving a thankful sigh that there's going to be some action but of course once you

pull the button up (or turn the key or switch the electrics on) then you may well hear the tinkle / buzz of the low air indicator warning you that pressures are down.

I've jumped the gun slightly here because I'm presuming that the vehicle in question is fitted with an electric starter. It's a given now of course but talk to some old salts and they'll tell you that in days of old, the starter was actually an additional extra. And the only thing standard was the starting handle.

The variety of cars my dad – Bill – had in the 1950s were generally well used with batteries of questionable reliability. The good thing to that was I was soon taught the starting technique by using the handle: "Make sure it's in neutral; ignition on; if it's cold, a bit of choke; get the compression cycle round so that the handle is say at the two o'clock position and then give it

a swift and solid churn."

While learning to drive up and down the back street when I must have been hardly 10-years-old, I can still picture my dad jumping in and out of the passenger seat (to re-start the engine) as I gradually learned not to stall the engine through good clutch control. Of course, living on a hill side at Delves Lane (near Consett) the easiest way to start the engine was just to let the car roll away; drop it into second gear and let the clutch out and then be quick enough to blip the engine into life. In fact a few years later – when I had a '63 Mini Traveller with a duff battery and no starting handle of course – I was fit enough to be able to push the Mini myself on the flat and then jump in; drop it into gear and fire the engine up. Happy days.

It's obviously a lot easier to start a small



Just the sight of an Atkinson adorned with a Gardner 180 badge coming towards you lets you know that you are about to hear one special – much loved – engine exhaust note.



One of the finest examples of the restored Foden S21 is the one which is now owned by Tony Johnson. And it sounds absolutely wonderful.

4-cylinder petrol engine on the handle than say a massive 6-cylinder diesel. Kick-back from the handle has (I'm told) caused serious injury / broken guy's arms and it was perhaps safer using a rope where friends could also give you a pulling hand.

You don't often see handles in use now but try and catch Mark Farrall with his immaculate Gardner powered Albion as he'll show you how it's done. On this application, Gardner fitted a decompression lever – very close to the starting handle – so this allows you to spin the engine freely (without any compression) and then bang the lever down into engagement and the engine should fire.

We love the tale Tyson Burridge tells of starting one of his Gardner powered vehicles (one cold morning in his home Cumbrian village of Mockerkinn) that had a very weak battery: "From cold, you first had to prime each cylinder with fuel by five motions of the

individual priming levers. Next you had to engage the cold start by moving the pump rack into position. On the six-cylinder Gardner, they had two decompression levers – which in turn worked three cylinders a time. I lifted them both and I told the driver to put his finger on the starting button and just keep it spinning. With the engine turning, I was able to engage one de-compression lever that started three cylinders going and once they were firing, I engaged the other decompression lever to start the other three cylinders." Magic.

COLD START

In the 21st century, it may be hard to understand about days when engines just wouldn't start simply because they were cold. Poor quality diesel often prompted an effect called waxing when the temperature was very low. And perhaps the only way then to free everything up – so the engine could be started – was to light a fire underneath a vehicle. Yes



You cannot beat spending your day just watching – and listening – to something like this. And find yourself on a steep hill like the one at Kiln Pit Hill and the exhaust sounds are even better.

you did read that right.

During cooler days you normally needed to activate the engine's cold start. On the 1964 Leyland Super Comet car transporter which I mated for Archie Glendinning, you lifted the engine cover in the cab and the Simms fuel pump had a small button that you just pushed in to give you an excess of fuel. As Tyson said earlier, the Gardner had a rack which you pulled back to engage and I can recall the BMC 5.7 diesel engine had their cold start pull cable mounted under the front bumper.

The problem with the excess fuel device is that drivers could be tempted to use that – when the engine was warm – to give more power. The giveaway was the excess amount of smoke but if you were struggling with an overloaded, under powered motor up somewhere like Shap or Beattock then a bit more smoke wasn't a concern. Legislators created provisions so that these devices couldn't be operated from the driving seat



▲ During the 1950s, Leyland fitted their 600 engine as standard into the four-wheel Beaver (rigid and tractor unit) the six-wheel Steer and Hippo plus the eight-wheel Octopus and nothing quite sounded like it.

◀ Of course nothing quite sounded like the gas turbine engine which Leyland tried out at the end of the 1960s but it never got beyond the prototype stage.

► Pre World War II models came as standard fitted with starting handles. Having an electric starter was at first an optional extra.



although guys often had things called 'saddles' which they could drop into the Gardner fuel rack and just jam this excess fuel provision wide open.

If the cold start didn't work, then you could perhaps light a rag and push it down the air intake. Sprays like 'Easi-Start' were offered but Tyson again didn't like them: "Once you started using them," he said, "the engine would become addicted to the spray and you needed to use it all year round. And excess use could take the top off a piston."

When at home, Tyson used to roll his Albion Reiver downhill to start and reckons his batteries would last for years because they weren't used so much. The problem then was until the engine started, you had little in the way of brakes (apart from the handbrake) although today, spring brake units mean you normally cannot move a vehicle until the air system is fully charged up.

Best way, Tyson reckoned, to help someone

else into life was to go back to back and push start them. If you tried to tow them with a rope or short length of chain, there was the chance they'd run into the back of you and damage their front end.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

All the problems of starting were of course forgotten about once the engine caught. And to this young spotter, stood beside the old A1 Great North Road at Framwellgate Moor roundabout near Durham, the passing vehicles brought music to my ears. While of course I was just an observer, I did adopt a certain amount of protocol in that there was a degree of status to engine sounds so of course, the rattle-rattle of the Perkins P6 (that say the Mark 5 Seddon four-wheeler used to use) was totally inferior to say a big Gardner 6LW. And when it came to two-strokes, while the Commer version was in far greater use, it was of course the Foden stroker that was far

superior – but not if you ask Chris Fable.

We featured Chris and the Handyman IV that he restored in Foster's Transport colours in Heritage Commercials November '16 issue. Chris obviously loves the sound of his Leyland powered Scammell but when we ask him about his favourite engine sound from yesteryear, he makes a strong case for the Commer TS3: "As a young lad - when I used to go with my dad - I can remember that sound quite well as he had a two stroke powered Commer. He would occasionally fetch beet pulp from Bardney sugar beet factory. It was on a route that passed where we lived so on the return journey, if I was out in the garden, I could hear him coming - every gear change up to about a mile and half away. That distinctive almost tinny rattle scream. Maybe it was due to being so low geared but nothing else sounds like it. Your AECs; Leylands and Gardners have that heavy groan - a bit like a Lancaster bomber - but the Commer is light and sings. When



Mark Farrall's Albion. The Gardner's engine de-compression lever is just below and slightly to the right of the offside front headlight.



Left to right – Steve Mitchell; the late Roger Austin and friend trying to coax the 1931 Scammell 'King Bobby' into life. Roger had just bought this box tractor after Derek Parnaby had a big sale of some of his vehicles.



With its own Mack engine – and upright exhaust stack – nothing quite sounded like these B61s which P&S Contracts ran during the 1960s. Tom Riding took this photograph.

I used to go with him, there would be 10 or so wagons leaving the Barkers & Lee Smith yard down Drake Street in Lincoln. They ran flatbed rigids and one bulker – all four wheelers. The residents along that street must have hated 6am. Yes, it's a piercing sound but one of those noises if you are a true engine buff you know and never forget. There were quite a few companies around Lincoln that had them – they were a very popular lorry in their day."

Yes, sitting in class at Consett Grammar School in the late 1950s, hearing the sound of say a National Coal Board Commer tipper climbing up to Number 1 would bring a phase of relief to trying to learn the tiniest bit of Latin. Sat there, I often wished we could have had lessons in engine sound recognition and I would have got top marks for that.

I was of course – at first – self taught and while things like Leyland, AEC and Gardner engines were heard almost every day, I can still recall a moment of awe when Sunters Rotinoff Atlantic came into town. I honestly had no idea what such a vehicle was but written on the

nearside of the engine bonnet it had: 'Powered by Rolls-Royce,' and of course I was totally smitten.

Like I said at the outset, I feel a bit sorry for those who can't now hear the many magical sounds of yesteryear that were commonplace to me. It was certainly great to hear the distinctive Albion sounds. Although then part of the Leyland empire, the little 4-pot LAD Chieftain had a lovely clickety-click musical sound to it; while the older HD57 eight-wheelers which BRS were still using had a lovely whooshing sound to their Albion made engine exhaust.

Of course, Leyland engines were used in the Caledonian eight-leggers and the LAD six-wheel Reivers while the early Clydesdale (and the stronger 'S' type Bedford) was often fitted with the Leyland 350 'whistler' – what a sound that made.

About 1958, I was lucky enough to be introduced to John Thompson and I travelled many miles with him in his Leyland Steer carrying Consett made steel all over. Of course

the Leyland's 600 engine had a sound all of their own. The tick-over was magical as the engine seemed to almost die before it slowly rumbled back into its cycle. And while not a big bus fan, I can still recall that the double decker Leylands of Stockton Corporation sounded almost pure when compared to the similar Guy Arab 'deckers of the Northern which had positively awful sounding Gardners.

I do of course have many more favourite sounds but to end this discourse, I sought the opinion of John Bryan. Although now resident on the island of Gozo (near Malta) John can look back on a life inter-meshed with the road transport world: "As far as engine noises are concerned," he says, "there has to be only one – although before I tell you what it is, I have two more. My dad drove a Foden DG four-wheeler and drag powered by a Gardner 4-cylinder diesel for an animal feed company in Nottingham. As a kid I went all over the place with him and the Gardner was a very calming motor, especially as the old man was



When Scammell introduced their 6x4 Crusader range they offered it with the Detroit two-stroke engine. What a sound that makes.



Left: The good thing about watching vehicles pass on the Military Road (between Carlisle and Hexham) was that you could see them coming for miles. This Seddon from the Colin Pitt stable wears its four rings Perkins engine badge with pride. **Right:** The door opening on the Scammell Highwayman is again another great sound of days gone by.



When I saw this Suters outfit in Consett I had never seen anything quite like it. It was only a lot later that I discovered the reason for the Foden's huge radiator was because it was fitted with an 8LW – an eight cylinder version of the 6LW which many folk used then. Pushing at the back was their Rotinoff Atlantic and I had never seen anything like this in my life – and 'Powered by Rolls Royce' written on the side. Wow.



▲ Seeing – and hearing – this Bob Bayliss Volvo F88 climb up through the narrows at Alston was just fantastic.

◀ One sound of the 70s which is still alive and well – more than 40 years on – is the wonderful Scania V8 engine much beloved by heavy haulers – and many others – across the land.



50% or more out of stick coasting in neutral. I grew up with that Gardner and the rumble was so reassuring, I was certain there was nothing as good as Gardners and I always was a fan, especially as the firm I did my apprenticeship with had a couple of Foden S18 eight-legger tippers powered by 6LWs, so I was definitely a Gardner man.

“This was the case for quite a while until I began to get involved with AECs. The AV 760 was coming on stream and the noise of a good driver going up the box, in one of the later Ergo’ eight-leggers or tractor units was music, until I heard a sound I not heard before. I knew Fodens had produced a two-stroke, but I had not seen or been involved with the engine.

“It was late ‘69 or maybe early ‘70 and I was parked on London Road in Nottingham talking to a pal. Coming out of Nottingham, was a Foden S21 eight-wheeler belonging to Hoveringham Gravels and it was loaded to the gunnels. The driver could certainly handle the 12-speed box, but the engine noise was a real roar and it sounded superb. And despite the weight, he was making good progress.

“The next comment from me was: ‘What the hell has he got in that,’ with the answer from my pal being: ‘A Foden two-stroke and it sounds like a Mk 6 to me’. From that day, much as I appreciate all the engines that I heard in the past – and all I may hear in the future – a Foden two-stroke on song with a 12-speed box, loaded and being driven well, is the ‘Bees-Knees’ of engine noise. It certainly raises the hair on the back of my neck that’s for sure.

“How did you feel – Bob – when you drove the one that Steve Mayle had restored for Tony Johnson and was featured on the front cover of the March ‘16 issue of Heritage Commercials?”

I’m pleased you should ask John because it felt great and of course it sounded wonderful. ❖



▲ It’s the sound of the door opening on this finely restored Volvo F86 which sends Gary Thompson – transport manager at Nicol’s – back to his childhood.

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Variety is the spice of life

Back in July 2016, Dean Reader visited the newly revamped British Motor Museum at Gaydon, and from the extensive collection of classic and modern classic machinery on display takes a closer look at some of his personal favourites.



This Minor fire appliance was in use at the Morris factory until 1983.

In 2016, I was looking forward to attending a show at the British Motor Museum. I had briefly read in the press about the new extension that they had built to house some of the more rarer exhibits from their overflow store but didn't take much note as I didn't want anything spoilt, unlike DVDs that advertise an upcoming movie and insist of showing us most of what is going to happen!

As you drive down the main road to the museum, you cannot fail to be impressed by the original block and the huge car park; as a child, I think I would be wetting myself with excitement. This in itself had been re-designed inside with more room to walk around the exhibits so you can get a closer look, with many re-grouped into their section; TV & movie cars, the Royal motors and the motorsport section, for example.

Across the way was the new building with its workshop (and viewing platform) and

huge Jaguar Daimler collection downstairs. Upstairs was the other collection, sadly too crammed in but showing many one-offs and design prototypes which should have gone into production. Several 'last off the production line' models with all the workers signatures on them, limousines, commercials and much more could be seen.

Lil Red Reliant

It was back in the main building where my heart lies though. On the timeline road that they have sits a 1970 Reliant Regal Supervan III, resplendent in the red livery of the Royal Mail. I have always loved these 700cc cars and vans and it is not because of a certain yellow example and its TV programme I hasten to add. I just think they look perfect for their time period with all the styling of a typical sixties/seventies car but blended into a one-piece fibreglass body, and even now grab a smile whenever one appears.

The nearest I ever got to owning one was a vastly superior eighties Rialto Jubilee, and it was superb! My only criticism was the poor demisting system in the winter and on the odd occasion the steering (keep away from lanes with a strip of grass down the middle of the road) but it really was a car that did what it was designed for and that was giving cheap, economical motoring to the masses.

It was this notion that made the Royal Mail experiment with a batch of 50 vans, all kitted out in the same way that the outgoing Morris Minors had, including bigger mirrors, extra locks and a wire grilled partition. However, I understand that the handling when loaded sealed its fate and they turned to the Morris Marina, amongst others, instead.

Burning Love

Fire appliances are meant to be quick, noisy, carry several personal and huge amounts of



The Minor is complete with ladder, fire extinguishers, axes etc.



The neat little appliance was built by the Engineering Department of Morris Motors.



Royal Mail experimented with a batch of 50 Reliant Regal Supervan III's as a replacement for their then outgoing Minor vans.



This special Land Rover Series I was constructed for the Queen's tour of the Commonwealth shortly after her coronation in 1953.



water, yes? Well no, not really. A means for putting out small fires in various locations within buildings was necessary and many of the larger factories had their own fire tenders, usually based on Land Rovers, but there were also some unusual models built specifically for this job and one of these was a cute Morris Minor. After twenty years of service, the elderly pre war Minor was nearing the end of its usage and a perfect replacement was soon on offer; the new ¼-ton Minor commercial which appeared in 1953. The Engineering Department of Morris Motors soon took a cab and chassis and adapted their own coachwork to create a neat little fire engine, complete with ladder, fire extinguishers, axes and such like. This example stayed in use until 1983 and was finally retired in 1990. There have been several replicas built and these often appear on the LCV show scene.

Monarchs of Gaydon

I have liked the fabled Land Rover ever since I received the Safari versions from the toy line, Britains. I will never own one but if I did, it would be in that guise - and a recent trip Longleat Safari Park didn't help either. However, I get more excited when I hear about or see conversions that are unusual, and the Royal Landy is one that I have always admired. Based on an 86in wheelbase model, it was constructed not long after the Queen's coronation in 1953, so she and Prince Philip could tour the Commonwealth. This trip took in over 50,000 miles from London to New Zealand, Australia, Sri Lanka (Ceylon then), through Africa and into Europe via Gibraltar. Needless to say, whilst the typical state ceremonial were the high class limousines, these would not cut the mustard in some of the terrains that they would cover, hence

a more utilitarian means of transport was required. Not that Her Majesty would mind the hardness of a Landy, being an outdoors type, and looking at those rear seats (and slim pull-out support 'seats' for when they were standing), she would have had to forgo comfort.

However, this was not the case with its replacement. Conceived in 1971, it was not until 1974 when the new vehicle appeared, this time based on the more luxurious Range Rover but again with an all new larger rear viewing platform made in steel rather than aluminium, and far superior leather seats; as with all the state cars, the Royal colour of Claret was used throughout.

There were many others that I could have picked as my interests are diverse, but the Rover SD1 estate car was a big missed opportunity if you ask me. Now, where next on my list of museums to visit?



This Royal Range Rover was delivered in 1974 and features a large rear viewing platform fitted with leather seats.



British Motor Museum

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PERFECT POWDY

Dean Reader takes a look back at the last Powderham show, which was held in July 2016.

Ask anyone what is the best classic vehicle event that takes place down in Devon and I believe that you will almost always get one word - Powderham. The Historic Vehicle Gathering takes place every year at Kenton, just outside of Exeter, in the grounds of Powderham Castle, and when the sun is out it encapsulates the very meaning of the whole classic car and commercial scene - everyone enjoying the huge variety of vehicles present; motorcycles, plant, tractors, military, steam engines, the list is endless. With the displays and arena entertainment there is plenty to do for the family, and add to that the warm smell of the well-trampled grass, diesel fumes and wood cutting machines, you are on to a weekend of nostalgia and relaxation - and let us not forget the smell of food and the beer tent that will waft into your system.

The event has always been organised by the The Crash Box & Classic Car Club, with the very first one taking place back in 1975 with just two motorcycles, 76 cars and six commercials when it was just a one-day event. Of course it has developed and blossomed ever since. Check out www.historic-vehicle-gathering.info for more pictures and information, and www.crashboxclub.co.uk for more about this hardworking club.



This 1967 Commer Maxiload looks superb in its various shades of grey. It belongs to A Burgoyne & Son of Kingsbridge, Devon.

One thing it is noted for is a good line-up of classic commercials both large and small, and a few are represented here, some of which I

hope to catch up with later this year for a better look. The 2017 event is taking place on 8th & 9th July so put it in your diaries - I will be.



This 1960s Mercedes L319 'Feuerwehrwagen' really stood out from the crowd.



Something a little older was this 1948 Austin K4 5-ton lorry belonging to Terry Davies of Leicester.



You can never be fed up with the sight of a Bedford TK. This 1984 example looked stunning in the orange & grey livery of RGS Stone of Feniton, Honiton.



Above:
Trucks can have just as much love devoted to them as cars, and this 1974 ERF in JW Smalley colours shows it in bucket loads! Note the sculptured body lines incorporated into the cab design.

Above right:
This 1962 AEC Mercury won Best Commercial for its owner, Nigel Blatch.

Right:
Whatever show you go to, you are pretty much guaranteed to see a Citroen H van in some form, most likely serving food.





Two ERF lovelies, a 1989 E Series and a 1960 KV, in the colours of Brian Harris.



This 1965 Ford Thames 400E is simply perfect, with flawless bodywork in a stunning shade of blue, and not sign-written, for a change.



A real delight was this 1950 Morris-Commercial FV12-5 with dropside body.



◀ One sure way to evoke nostalgia is with a Morris van in a classic paint scheme. The K registration would suggest that this is one of the last Minor commercials.

▶ This 1971 Post Office Minor van has a white stripe which denotes it is a Postal Engineering van.



Direct replacement

Mark Gredzinski looks into the working life of the Volvo FL7.



Walpole and Wright Ltd, who hauled among other things, sugar beet, used to run Leyland Buffalo tractors and later Volvo F7 units. It's logical that the FL7 would take over haulage duties from the latter and this smart 1989 example was seen crossing junction 10 of the M6 in the Midlands.

Volvo had established itself nicely at the lighter end of the heavyweight truck market with the F7 range. This was a popular model but having been around since the mid-seventies it was due for replacement in the next decade. It would have been easy to produce perhaps a re-skinned F7 cab but instead, Volvo boldly altered the concept to manufacture a brand new lower and broader cab. This became the FL7 line of tractors.

Also, using the same structure, the FL10 range arrived as a more powerful alternative using a 10-litre 318bhp diesel (from the bigger Volvo F10 tractors), which I'll look at later.

The FL7 then, looked to cover all the various duties that the previous F7 handled which included six- and eight-wheeled rigids. For this feature we're sampling the machine in its popular fleet tractor role. The low-set FL7 cab was some 20 centimetres wider than the old F7 so should have straight away been noticeably more spacious. However, it quickly became known as the 'Wendy House' which was mildly disparaging. The angular looks and

perceived lack of driver space earned the FL7/10 range this moniker. Many drivers expressed surprise after the conventional layout of the F7; why did they now have a sleeper cab that you had to get out of and go round to the next door to get back into bed?! This was something of an exaggeration, but the wrap around instrument console that encroached into the centre of the interior was not to every drivers taste. It was somewhat reminiscent of an American Chevy Titan 90 cabover, but at least the instruments were easy to view and comprehensive. The cab could tilt at 60 degrees once the grille was lifted for engine access.

Generally though, the FL7 was well received. "A lovely motor to drive" was a general quote as the cab was quiet, well-appointed and actually roomy with good visibility. A lack of leg room was one criticism from taller drivers as it did not compare to the F10 in this respect. It had a tight turning circle so could be spun around a yard easily and the handling and ride matched most rivals.

The initial engines were developments

of the old F7 powertrain with the 7-litre TD71F at 230bhp and the TD71FS at 245bhp. Eight-speed Volvo R52 gearboxes came as standard and 16-speed R62 range change gearboxes were offered as an option on the FL7. Though fuel consumption when loaded was very good as the tractor unit was light, a lack of power in a 32 tonne application was noticeable. Later in 1994, a new 282bhp turbocharged diesel helped cheer up the performance somewhat.

The low-line cab was ideal for flatbed work and fitted well against a sheeted load, but for taller van trailers a roof-mounted air deflector was beneficial for improved mileage. Some operators had reliability issues and the diesel pump drive was sometimes an Achilles heel, but in the main, the FL7 proved to be a great fleet lorry. Russell Davies was one operator, as was Plysu Plastics, and many found favour with various supermarkets using refrigerated and dry vans.

Amazingly, it's been over 30 years since they were first introduced in Britain and a few examples of the fresh faced Volvo are still around, albeit mostly as rigids. ♦



AF Blakemore & Son are based in Willenhall near Wolverhampton. They specialise in wholesale food and drink distribution and used to run Volvo F7s. This 1988 FL7 was captured one afternoon in January 1992 negotiating a local roundabout.



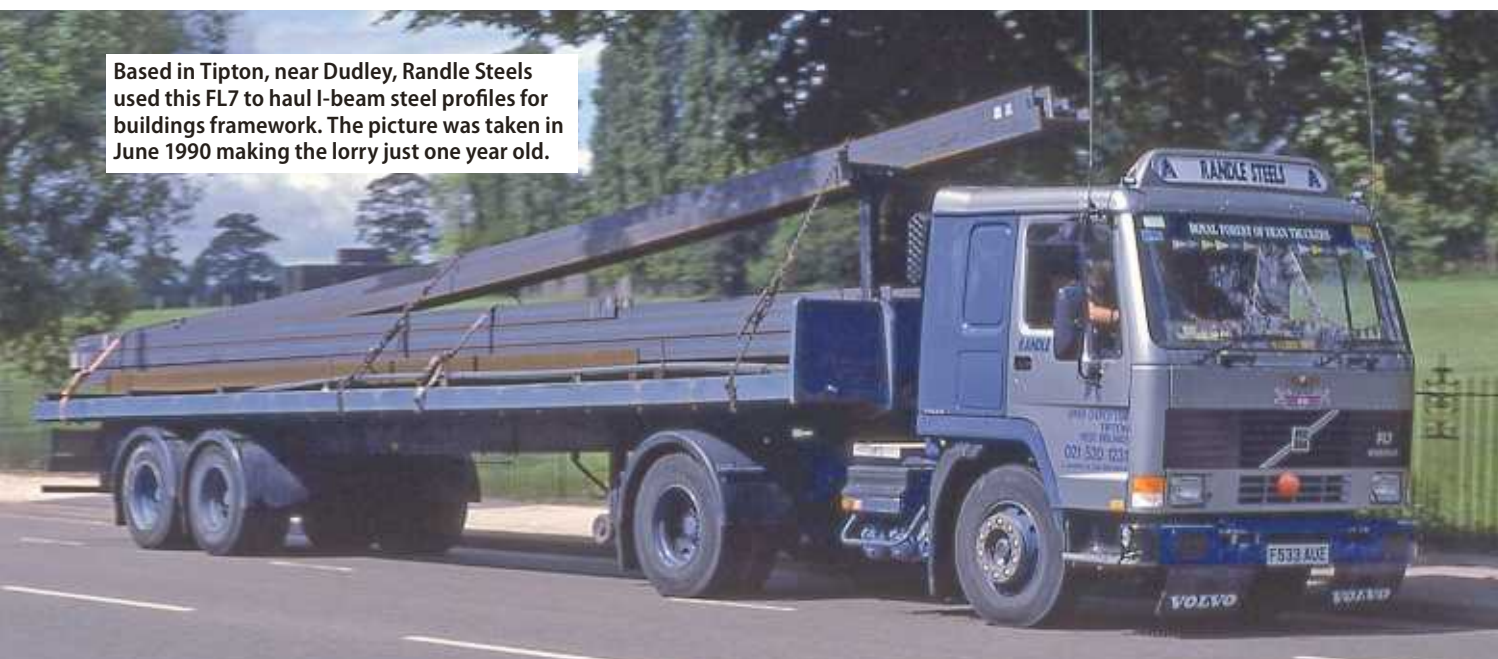
Pickfords are well known for heavy haulage but this 1987 FL7 with well under 300bhp on tap would seemingly appear a tad underpowered for such a big load on a tri-axle trailer! However, I'm sure it coped on a general motorway run back in January 1992.



Photographed when brand new in the summer of 1987, this FL7 and skeletal trailer belonged to P&O Roadways who ran out of a container base in Duddeston, central Birmingham. Their attractive pale blue and white livery was seen on heavier MAN twin-steer tractors, and they ran a large fleet of Volvo F7s which this FL7 and others were gradually replacing.



Wrefords Transport of Northampton have been going since 1904 so understandably, much haulage tackle has passed through the company. The last of the British units were a selection of ERFs and the usual Euro suspects make up the heavier end of their nicely liveried fleet. Back in August 1992, this FL7 was photographed resting at a Walsall lorry park in the early hours.



Based in Tipton, near Dudley, Randle Steels used this FL7 to haul I-beam steel profiles for buildings framework. The picture was taken in June 1990 making the lorry just one year old.



Simpson Bros of Stocksfield in Northumberland ran Seddons early on and later, ERF B Series together with Scania 81 and 111 units. This 1989 FL7 was captured heading towards junction 10 of the M6 in January 1992 and the tall trailer illustrates how low the cab was.



▲ This early FL7 dates from 1986 and was run by the J Round Group from Wednesbury in the West Midlands who used to haul machinery. This unladen unit was returning to base and was photographed in November 1989 at nearby Great Bridge. J Round had a couple of Atkinson Borderers and Iron Fairy cranes in the yard as well.

► From Ashbourne in Derbyshire came AK Transport who had run all sorts of bulk powder tankers from S80 Fodens to later DAFs and Renault tractors. Their FL7 was photographed on the M6 in March 1992.



▲ Allinson Transport of Darlington have always run a smart fleet and used to run Volvo F10 and 12 tractors. They nowadays have a lot of Scania on the books. This FL7 (reg number E337 MHN) was captured in October 1994 negotiating a tight bend on a Walsall ring road.



This is a later FL7 from 1992. Belonging to Durapipe of Norton Canes in Staffs, it was photographed a year after manufacture on a May morning using a 300mm telephoto lens to foreshorten perspective. This was on the A5 near Lichfield.



▲ I know nothing about the origins of G&G Transport but their tidy green FL7 was captured passing in front of the main fire station in Walsall in September 1995. I think the driver has got his A to Z guide in his hand, so must be a bit lost!

► James Timms from Whitminster in Gloucestershire have been going since 1980 and still use Volvos today. Their FL7 was on its way possibly to Mitcheldean on the A40 Ross-on-Wye Road in August 1995.



▲ John Raymond Transport has been established in Bridgend since 1953. They used to run a lot of steel but do more general haulage nowadays. This Volvo was photographed by poking my camera lens through a chain link fence in 1989 at a secure lorry park.



Sun Chemical are a major producer of printing inks and have three depots in the UK. Their FL7 and tanker was captured on film at speed on the M6 in Birmingham, around May 1990.



Left: JW Pallett I believe came from Nuneaton in Warwickshire. Their FL7 with a partial load of pipes and tubes was brightened up with fill-in flash as it passed by on a dull February day in 1994. **Right:** In April 1995 I was up in Trafford Park in Manchester to get me some good lorry pics in the sunshine. This 1988 FL7 tractor and container belonged to local company Benson Transport, and made a nice image.



Fletchers Frozen Foods have a large Sheffield based bakery division. Their smart new FL7 and refrigerated trailer was photographed steadily driving around a local roundabout in June 1996.

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Sixties double-act

The recent restoration of two products made by the Austin-Morris combine serve as a reminder of the importance of Morris Commercial to Britain's truck manufacturing heritage. Ed Burrows tells the story of the restorations and explores the history of a one-time giant of the industry.

With their 2016 restorations completed and ready for the rally circuit, the Walsh brothers were on a quest for a new project. Ray was searching eBay, which in the past had proved a useful source for parts. "What about this? It's an FFK."

Kenny examined it. "FFK my foot. We've done an FFK and the cab's nothing like that." The blurb confirmed it was indeed a Morris FFK tractor unit, but the cab was coachbuilt and had a peculiar scooped out back panel. Both had the same thought. It was probably unique, it was definitely a curiosity – and was in scrap condition. It ticked all their boxes.

Kenny conceded: "If it's an FFK, its hiding under a small caravan." They drove down to Cambridgeshire to the yard where it was awaiting its fate. They went in the 1966 Volvo N86 they restored a few years back and in the process equipped it with recovery gear. The FFK's cab was rotten to the core. "Perfect," exclaimed Ray. Coachbuilding being his department, his delight was heightened by the fact although the metalwork was bashed but salvageable, apart from the headlight mountings, the entire timber structure would have to be replicated and totally replaced.

The deal was done. They towed it back to Manchester. On the motorway, a car drew level with the Volvo. The front passenger put the window down and yelled that something had fallen off the wreck they were towing. "Thank you," Kenny responded. "If you can retrieve it you can keep it as a souvenir."

Custom built

Their FFK is a 1962 spec, one of a pair fitted with coachbuilt cabs. They were custom jobs for North Thames Gas and hauled a semi-trailer kitted out as a mobile showroom. The Walshes' example had spent part of its life as a circus booking office. (It is thought its sibling no longer exists.)

Kenny and Ray Walsh are not averse to working on two vehicles at once. They also like their restorations to be functional. In that respect, the FFK without a trailer can be seen more as an ornamental novelty than a toy to be played with.

Kenny received a phone call. "Hi, remember me? We met at the British Commercial Vehicles Museum a few years back. "Sorry pal, no. I have enough trouble remembering myself sometimes." The caller said he had a Sherpa camper van for sale and during the ensuing conversation indicated he



Kenny and Ray Walshes' bespoke cabbed 1962 Morris FFK, restored from a rotting wreck in the space of five months.

had a few old trucks on his farm.

Curiosity usually gets the better of Kenny Walsh, so even though he said no to the Sherpa, off they went to the farm in Staffordshire to have a look. One of the trucks was an Austin FJ, but its condition was too good to be of interest. Then, partly concealed by undergrowth, they spotted another FJ, in a suitably sorry state. It was a 1967 example with recovery bodywork. Kenny and Ray deliberated, then agreed that, fitted with a tilt-and-slide loadbed, the FJ could be an ideal travelling companion for the FFK. They agreed to buy the chassis and cab, conditional on making another trip to remove the recovery gear which the farmer could sell for scrap.

The trip again provided an excellent excuse for enjoying another outing with the Volvo (which has since been put up for sale). The FJ was brought to Manchester on suspended tow. And the Walshes revealed their soft side by buying the Sherpa as well. "We're battle-hardened," Kenny said at the time. "Working on three at once is a nice

challenge. It's only a hobby, don't forget. We only have evenings and weekends – though Ray's in semi-retirement mode and skives the odd day off his plumbing and heating business. We'll have them done for New Year."

Kenny doesn't want to give the impression they do it all by themselves. Willing helpers pop in to the Walsh's workshop in a steady stream and volunteer their skills. "They certainly don't call round for a brew," Kenny quips. "We're mean on the catering front. Standing round yarning over mugs of tea doesn't get the job done."

Photographic record

Work on the three vehicles started in earnest last September. The FFK's cab was painstaking dismantled and the chassis stripped, sandblasted and painted with red oxide. For reference, Ray photographed each step of the bodywork dismantling process and made templates where necessary. He then replicated the entire original framework in ash, consistent with the type of wood used when cab was first built. To ensure

Fitted with a tilt-and-slide recovery platform, the Walshes' 1967 Austin FJ was restored over the same time period as their FFK.



the replacement frame and the original compound-curved metalwork of the roof, front and back panels were a perfect fit, extra stress was placed on Ray's self-taught mastery of the coachbuilder's art. And of those who've attempted it themselves will know, the trickiest part is re-hanging the doors.

Whilst Ray was working on the FFK's cab, Kenny took care of the engine, gearbox, brakes, steering and rewiring – and began attacking the FJ. The cab was not too bad, but the second-hand tilt-and-slide loadbed had too much overhang and had to be shortened. Because tilt-and-sliders were not around in the 1960s, the installation has been engineered so the truck gives the impression of being an ordinary flatbed.

The farmer claimed the FJ was a good runner. "Runner? It was seized solid – and overrun with field mice," Kenny explains. "When it wouldn't start, the first thing I checked was the bell-housing. There they were – and they'd nested in the engine, inlet manifold and exhaust as well. Water had also got into the inlet manifold, seizing the pistons. Getting the engine running required a complete rebuild, with a set of six new liners and pistons, shell bearings and a gasket set. The FJ had 98,000 miles on the clock, so during its working life it was probably unaffected by the overheating problems FJs were evidently prone to. As a precaution, the Walshes decided to add extra rows of tubes to the radiator.

Austin and Morris FJs are indistinguishable from each other apart from the nameplate. The model was introduced in 1964 and built at the Leyland/BMC combine's newly opened Bathgate plant in Scotland. FJs were the first Austin/Morris tilt-cabs. To achieve the lowest possible floor, the 6-cylinder engine block is canted to the left. Preserved FJs are relatively uncommon.

By the end of the Christmas and New Year holiday all three vehicles were largely complete. "We overshot the deadline, but heck. Two trucks completely rebuilt in five months, and the Sherpa restored as well. Not bad, eh? They still needed a few finishing touches, but it was time for a breather. In the middle of February off we flew to Tenerife



The FFK's coachbuilt cab was rotten to the core and required totally dismantling and rebuilding.



Although Ray Walsh was able to save the original sheet metal, the entire timber framework had to be replicated.





▲ Built for North Thames Gas with mobile showroom trailer, the FFK later served as a circus booking office. ◀ Apart from carefully recording each step of the dismantling process, this photo was one of only two references to guide the rebuild.



Left: The unusual concave rear panelling was conformal with a fin at the front of the mobile showroom trailer. **Right:** The Walshes decided this FJ was sufficiently far gone to justify acquiring as a restoration project.

for a week-long birthday bash to celebrate Ray's sixty-fifth." By the end of last month apart from some trim details and signwriting on the FJ, the only significant task remaining was testing and fine tuning the tilt-and-slide-back's hydraulic system.

The first outings, with FFK on the back of the FJ, are likely to be the Llandudno Transport Festival and the Cheshire Run. Meanwhile, Kenny and Ray Walsh are on the lookout for a new challenge or two. If anybody knows of a truck of a type that's a rarity and is in death-row condition, it might excite their interest.

From car-based vans to 8x8s

With the Walshes' Morris FFK in mind, it's an appropriate moment to delve into the entwined history of Morris, Morris Commercial, Austin and BMC.

The British Motor Corporation (BMC) was created in 1952 by the amalgamation of Austin with the Nuffield Organisation, parent of Morris Commercial and Morris, together with the MG, Riley and Wolseley car marques. At the time of the merger, Austins were built at a newly modernised plant in Longbridge. Nuffield on the other hand was juggling with sixteen different manufacturing plants. Amongst these, Morris car-derived vans and pickups were built at Cowley, Oxford. Morris Commercial light vans and their derivatives – and, until

1956, FV Series forward-control trucks – were built at Adderley Park in Birmingham.

Despite the gradual rationalisation of the amalgamated group's Austin and Morris/Morris Commercial truck ranges, this stopped at the factory gates. Otherwise identical vehicles were sold through the separate Austin and Morris/Morris Commercial dealership networks. From 1955/6, all chassis above 1.5/2-tons were manufactured at Longbridge. Coinciding with this, the Morris Commercial name was dropped, with the trucks badged simply as Morris.

Badged with either Austin or Morris nameplates, the FJ range was introduced in 1964. The BMC name was briefly reintroduced in 1968. It was applied to all van and truck types. At that point, the Austin and Morris badges were dropped. But it all changed again in 1970 when the Leyland name was applied universally. The BMC name actually lives on in Turkey, on trucks, buses and military vehicles manufactured by BMC Otomotiv, a Turkish group that began life as a British Motor Corporation export joint-venture partner.

At the time of the merger with Austin, the

Sunday 26 February saw the will-it/
won't-it test of the tilt-and-slide system.
It worked – first time.





Left: A restored 1925 Morris Commercial T type, a model also known as a 'Tonner'. **Right:** The last type of medium truck built by Morris Commercial itself was the 1948 FV. The rear-hinged doors formed the cab's sides.



The FE replaced the FV in 1955 and was assembled at the former Austin works at Longbridge.

only forward-control truck made by either side was the FV series 5-tonner. Introduced by Morris Commercial in 1948, it followed on from normal and semi-forward control predecessors introduced in the 1930s. Above 1.25 tons, Austin itself had never had a forward-control truck in its range.

The rear-hinged 'suicide' doors of the initial FV cab were replaced by conventional front-hinges in 1953. At less than 7ft wide and with engine encroachment, the cab was a tight fit. This is probably why it was designed with doors that formed the entire sides of the cab, extending from the screen pillar to the back panel. The FV was available with 70-80bhp 4- and 6-cylinder side-valve petrol engines (100bhp in the tractor version). An alternative direct injection diesel 'six' was made under license from the Swiss manufacturer Saurer. The modifications made to this engine by Morris were not a conspicuous success. After the merger with Austin, the FV was initially replaced by the Longbridge-built FVS, followed in 1955 by the FE, which had revised frontal sheet metal.

Last of the line

The last commercial vehicle design credited with having been conceived by the Morris side of the British Motor Corporation was the innovative 1.5/5-ton FG, with angled access doors and close-maneuvring vision panels

below the large single-piece windscreen.

The FE was produced as 5/7-tonner and a 10-ton gross combination weight tractor. Operators had a choice of a 105bhp 5.1-litre, 6-cylinder diesel or 4-litre petrol engine. The 7-tonner wore the BMC badge for a period in 1955 and 1956.

In 1958 the FE was succeeded by FF/FFK/FH series 5/8-ton rigids and a 12-ton tractor – or 15 tons when spec'd with an Eaton 2-speed axle. Engines were again a 4-litre petrol or a 105bhp diesel (now upped to 5.7 litres). The spec included hydrovac brakes and power steering. Gone were the flat-panel split windscreen of its predecessors. BMC gave its Morris and Austin twins the distinction of being the only British trucks with a single-piece wraparound screen, aping the style of cabs sported by Chevrolet and other US volume-producers in this period.

The FH development was introduced in 1963. It had the same basic cab but a revised engine installation, with the block canted to achieve an almost flat floor. With the FJ replacement being produced at the new Bathgate, West Lothian plant, the FF was the last Midlands-built Austin/Morris/BMC medium-weight.

Morris Commercial was launched as a subsidiary of Morris Motors in 1924. The vast 21-acre Adderley Park, Birmingham manufacturing complex was taken over by Morris in 1926 following the collapse of



This 1960 FFK has the type of pressed steel cab North Thames Gas replaced with their two coachbuilt specials.

Wolseley Motors. In 1929 the site became known as the Morris Commercial Heavy Vehicle Works.

A new name

The Morris Commercial name first appeared on the radiator header casting in 1927. By this time the T type one-tonner had been in production for three years. The 2.5-ton gross laden weight T type was the first Morris goods model that had a car engine but a chassis that was not car-derived. The engine was a 31bhp 1.8-litre. The bigger 1.25/1.5-ton payload Z type was introduced in 1926. Its 34bhp, 2.5-litre, 4-cylinder petrol engine was purpose-designed for goods vehicles. It was subsequently enlarged to 3.0-litres, in which form it produced 45bhp. Later 1920s developments were the TX, R and 'Leader' PB4 normal control and PF4 short-bonnet types with payloads in the 1.5/2.5-ton range. The next step-up in payload was the 1931 'Courier' normal control 4-tonner and its 5-ton forward-control counterpart. These were followed during the course of the 1930s by C and CV type evolutions. With more substantial looking sheet metal and bigger section tyres, engine outputs were in the 55-85bhp range.

In parallel with the Z type, development began of the 1.5/2-ton payload D type, similar in appearance but with two drive-axes. It was produced in long and short



In production from 1960 until the early 1980s, the FG was the last goods vehicle designed by Morris Commercial engineers.



A 1937 CS11/40F, a short-nosed semi-forward-control alternative to the bonneted version.



TD 6x4 Army field cars, very much the Range Rovers of their day, were replaced by the similar CD model, seen here.



Morris Commercial produced some 15,000 CS8 Army 4x2s with various body types between 1934 and 1940.

wheelbases. The TD 6x4 'touring car' derivative was used by the Army as a senior officer's field car. It had a canvas hood, five seats and a folding map table. Demonstrating the model's traction advantages, in 1928 a pair of D types became the first wheeled vehicles to cross South Africa's million square mile Kalahari Desert. D types and their successor CD developments were supplied to the British Army in bonneted and semi-forward control cargo truck and gun tractor forms right up to the outbreak of WW2. D types were also exported to India, China and elsewhere.

Alongside the 6x4s, military-spec CS8 4x2s were produced from 1934, with nearly 15,000 delivered by early-WW2. Later specs had 60bhp petrol engines. In the wake of the Dunkirk evacuation by the Allies in 1940, many CS8s were left behind and used by the German Army.

The CS8 gave birth to the C8 4x4 series, chiefly produced as artillery tractors. By the end of the war Morris Commercial had delivered 10,000 examples of these highly capable vehicles. The C8 was built on a patented chassis frame with an 8.25ft wheelbase. Power was provided by a 70bhp, 3.5-litre straight-6 petrol engine with drive through a 5-speed gearbox. At a gross train weight of 8.4 tons towing an ammunition limber and 25-pounder field gun, the C8 could ascend a 1-in-3 gradient in bottom gear.

Morris Commercial has the distinction of producing in 1929 what research suggests was the world's first 8x8 cargo truck with front-bogie steering. Based on the Morris Commercial 6x4, it was a prototype commissioned by the War Office's Mechanical Warfare Experimental Establishment. (In the same year, a very unorthodox prototype built by Armstrong Siddeley comprised two rigid units with central pivot steering.) Unremarkable in appearance apart from the twin front drive/steer axles, it had skinny tyres (with twin rears), a straight bonnet with side louvres, canvas cab top and horizontally-split

windscreen glass. The 8x8 was abandoned, but the company's WW2 production included a contract to supply 500 Terrapin 8x8 amphibians. Designed by Thornycroft, the 4-ton skid-steered Terrapin had twin Ford V8 engines and separate left- and right-side drivelines.

The Morris Commercial name is kept alive by the 475 members of the impressively well-run Morris Commercial Club. In its day, the company's ability to manufacture competitive products in high volume made it a giant of Britain's goods vehicle industry. Underlining that, Morris Commercial delivered around 80,000 military vehicles from 1934 to 1945. ♦



The final version of the C8 4x4 'Quad' field artillery tractor. Earlier body types featured a sloped steel rear roof section.

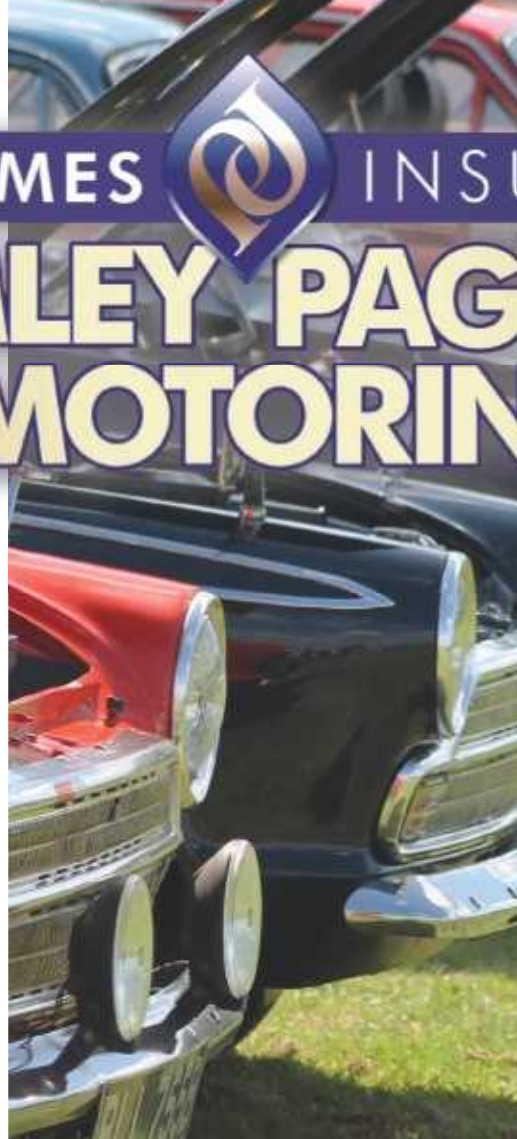
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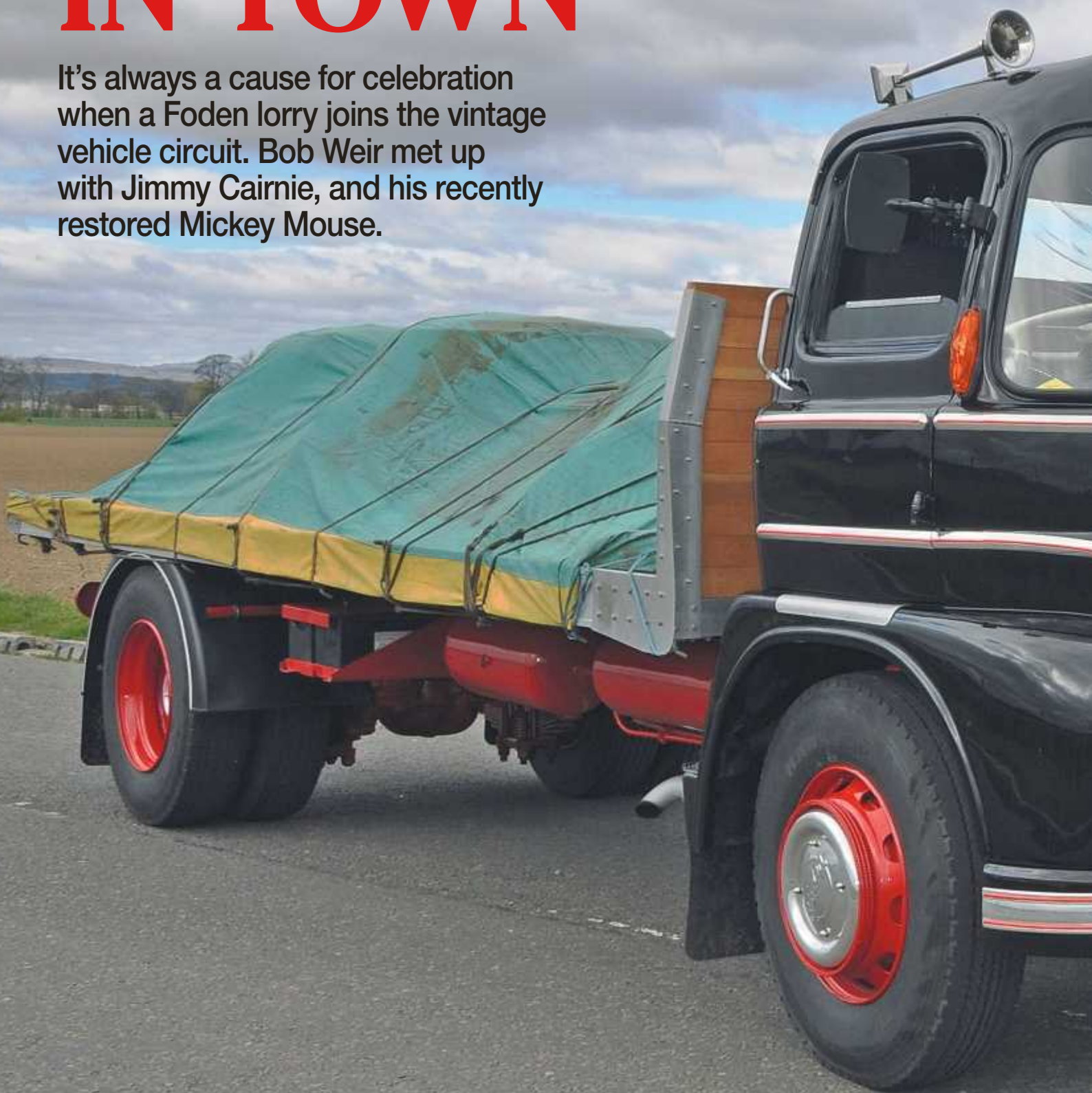
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NEW KID IN TOWN

It's always a cause for celebration when a Foden lorry joins the vintage vehicle circuit. Bob Weir met up with Jimmy Cairnie, and his recently restored Mickey Mouse.



Owner Jimmy Cairnie has been a big Foden fan since he was a boy.



The Foden was new to a Peterborough potato merchant called Baxter and Guion Ltd.

Jimmy will be no stranger to readers of *Heritage Commercials*, as his distinctive Foden S21, registered ALE 186, was featured in the March 2006 edition of the magazine. The lorry was a popular sight on the Scottish rally scene for many years, until it was sold a couple of years ago at a Morris Leslie Classic Auction. Which begged the obvious question: why did he decide to sell the lorry?

"The problem was I didn't have enough garage space to store both Fodens," Jimmy explained. "I had already acquired TEG 472 in 2009, and it was just parked up in my driveway. I'd already done some work on the vehicle, but it was hard going, without a covered workspace. I ended up switching the lorries over in 2012, and it was ALE's turn to sit outside. We then suffered a couple of bad winters, and the lorry started to suffer."

After spending some time mulling things over, the matter came to a head in 2014.

"It had reached the point where I had to do something before ALE went downhill," said Jimmy. "I remembered that my late wife said that I could only drive one lorry at a time, and I realised I would have to let the Foden go. Then last summer I happened to bump into Morris Leslie at the Biggar rally. We were chatting about Fodens, as he had recently acquired a lorry of his own. He then suggested that if I ever wanted to sell ALE, he could put it into one of his classic auctions. I wasn't having any joy shifting the lorry through any of the specialist magazines, so decided to give it a go."

So how did Jimmy feel about parting with the lorry, after owning it for all this time?

He said: "Looking back the sale was quite an emotional experience. My granddaughter had offered to take me to the auction at Errol, and she kept asking me whether I was doing the right thing. It was a close call as to whether I would jump into the Foden's cab, and drive the lorry back home. However, I managed to hold firm. I found out later that the Foden was sold to a collector from Bury St Edmonds, Derek Cooper Transport, so it looks like it has gone to a good home."

FODEN FAN

Jimmy has spent a lifetime in transport, and has been a big fan of Foden since he was a boy. Born in Crawford in the Scottish Borders, he now lives close to that engineering marvel the Falkirk Wheel.

"The first lorry I ever drove was a second-hand Leyland Beaver," he said. During a career spanning over forty years, Jimmy has hauled all over the UK. He has many good memories, particularly of Shap Summit. He said: "You had to be careful there, particularly during winter. Fatal accidents were quite common, and the climb had to be treated with respect. If you let the speed build up while you were coming down, you could be in serious trouble."

Jimmy had his fair share of close shaves, and when he is in the area rarely passes up the opportunity to take a trip down memory lane. His love of Foden also dates back to his youth, when he was brought up next to a haulage depot.



Restoring the cab was a real problem. The fiberglass had to be cut away in order to get to the rotten wooden cab frame. *Photos courtesy Jimmy Carnie*



The Foden's interior will bright back memories to so many drivers!



The Foden badge is not a regular fitment, and was borrowed off an old steam engine.



Specification

Make/model:	Foden S21 KG5/14
Year:	1964
Registration:	TEG 472
Engine:	Gardner 5LW
Transmission:	12-speed Foden
Top Speed:	47 mph

He said: "I first drove a Foden when I was working for a tube company supplying the oil industry. I was hooked from the first gear change, and have been a big fan ever since. Looking back I suppose my favourite model was the S20. I can remember the lorry coming on the market when I was a teenager, and it was very popular. I also liked the S21 'Mickey Mouse'. I believe this was Foden's first effort at using glass fibre. The lorry's appearance was quite distinctive for its day, and made a change from the usual box shape."

Now that ALE 186 had been sold, Jimmy could concentrate all his attention on TEG 472. He said: "By this stage TEG 472 was restored and up and running, although there were a couple of things that needed finishing off. I originally spotted the vehicle back in 2009 in an advert in Heritage Commercials magazine. The owner was a showman based in Manchester. I rang him up, and he said the lorry was a runner in good condition. I decided to take my wife down for a closer look with the intention of making a deal, and driving the lorry back to Scotland."

But when Jimmy arrived at the owner's yard, he was in for a bit of a shock. "When I first saw the lorry my initial reaction was 'that Foden is not going anywhere anytime soon'. The lorry looked in poor condition, and certainly not fit for a 200 mile haul back up the motorway to Scotland. I decided instead to make an offer for the Foden's 12-speed gearbox, with a view

to putting it in ALE.

"The owner wasn't impressed with my change of heart to put it mildly, and even ordered me out the yard! Fortunately, his two sons were there to calm him down. It was obvious they wanted to get rid of the Foden, so they persuaded me to hang around while they had a word with dad."

While all this was going on, it allowed Jimmy the opportunity to give TEG 472 a good once over. He said: "I had been told that the lorry was originally new to a potato merchant called Baxter and Guion Ltd based in Peterborough. On closer inspection the Foden seemed to have a good chassis, and despite my initial misgivings I realised it had potential. By this time the owner had calmed down, so I decided to buy the vehicle. I returned to Scotland, and travelled down to Manchester again a few days later with a borrowed low-loader. I was even able to drive the Foden onto the trailer, which seemed to bode well for the vehicle's mechanics."

But having transported the lorry back to Scotland, Jimmy soon realised the enormity of the task that lay ahead.

HARD WORK

"The more I examined the lorry, the more I realised how much work was going to be involved," he recalls. "To begin with ALE was still kept in the garage, and the new lorry was parked in the driveway. I decided to start

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the restoration with the back axle. The lorry had been standing idle for years, and it soon became clear that the hubs were in a bit of a state. I had to fit new ball racers and seals all round, which was quite expensive. When I moved on to the brakes, they were also in poor condition.

"Fortunately the gearbox did not need a lot of work, other than a good clean up and change of oil. The Foden 12-speed was the first of the multi-speed gearboxes, and quite advanced for its day. I had first come across it when I was still a boy living in Crawford. Foden vehicles up from England used to stop at the depot overnight to change drivers. I was friendly with one of the local drivers, and occasionally I would skip school and he would take me along for a ride. One night he came round to my house and said: 'you won't believe what I'll be driving tomorrow.' The lorry turned out to be a S18 two-stroke. I used to help him operate one of the two gear levers, so I knew what was involved."

Although Jimmy was happy with the gearbox, the engine was another matter.

"It was in a terrible state," he remembers. "In my experience, Gardner engines always had a habit of leaking oil, but in this case the sump was loose and the sludge was so bad I had to empty it with a shovel. I then sent the injectors down to Gardner Enthusiast in Chalgrove near Oxford. When I got the parts back they were perfect. The engine now runs smoothly, and I have no complaints.

"You have to remember while all this restoration work was going on I was still

driving for a local company, so spare time was at a premium. The lorry had come as a chassis/cab - there was no body. Restoring the cab was a nightmare. Even though the 'Mickey Mouse' cab was made out of fibreglass, there was still all the wood inside, which was a throwback to the old style wagons. The fibreglass had to be cut away to get at the wood, and the job seemed to take forever. Fortunately my friend Joe Hempstead is quite an expert with fibreglass, and he agreed to help out."

NOT PLEASED

"We'd lifted the cab off by this stage, and had put it on a trailer. While the cab was off, I took the chassis up to a specialist painter at Auchterarder. He blasted it right back to the bare metal. I then brought the chassis back home, and re-fitted the cab. To do this I had to borrow a special forklift with a high extendable arm. It was then just a question of waiting until the painter had some free time, to finish the job. Unfortunately, this took the best part of a year. To cap it all the painter then came round one evening and asked me to take the cab off again, because he was running out of space. I was not best pleased, as you can imagine!

"Anyway I agreed to do it, and we took the cab back up to his workshop. Once the job was finished we then took the chassis up to the paint shop, and re-assembled the lorry. I then drove the Foden home. This was quite an experience, as this was the first time the vehicle had been driven for 20 years. The smoke belching out was awful, but things

calmed down after a few miles. Because there was no weight on the rear end the lorry kept bouncing around, and the trip took over an hour."

Jimmy was concerned about the lorry's low cruising speed of only 40mph, so decided to get in touch with Foden experts John Sanderson and Robert Matthews, about a replacement differential.

He said: "John had a pair of higher speed diffs, so I took my van down to England to pay him a visit. I chose what I thought was the better of the two, but when I got home the half shafts didn't fit properly so I had to go back down again. The diff still isn't ideal, but the lorry will now cruise at 47mph."

Once the lorry's flatbed had been fitted, along with a few final touches, it was time for the Foden's first proper outing at an Easter rally held at Kirkby Stephen.

Jimmy said: "This was the first time the Foden had been out as a complete lorry for almost a quarter of a century. My granddaughter's boyfriend Gary came along to keep me company. He is a motor mechanic to trade, but the Foden was built a bit before his time. Despite this he had been a big help with the electrics during the restoration, and certainly enjoyed the trip down to Brough.

"I wasn't too concerned about breaking down, as we'd made plenty of last minute checks. At the end of the day it's a Foden with a Gardner engine, so I knew we would get home in one piece. The lorry was well received at the show, and everybody seemed happy to see it back on the road." ♦



Flying the flag



Dave Bowers visits Roberts Transport, Ross Roadways, to see a British classic that's just been put back to work.

Traditional British-made trucks have sometimes had a bad press over the last few decades, although that is not to say that they have not done well in the hands of many appreciative hauliers, both past and present. Take, for example, Roberts Transport, Ross Roadways, a family owned and operated business established in 1968, which is based in Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. This firm is managed today by the four Roberts brothers, Graham, Anthony, Haydn and Terry, and it specialises in bulk tipper work and steel haulage, while still operating a mixed fleet of ERFs and Fodens, which proudly fly the Union Jack to underline a patriotic message!

The restoration

The latest addition to the Roberts' fleet is a 2002 registered ERF ECX, which has recently undergone extensive restoration by Graeme Turner, of Turners of Much Hoole. "He was

the only man who could do the work to this sort of standard," said Graham. "He prepared this lorry exactly the way he would have done for one of his own. It's a fine piece of work. This joins another ECX, which was purchased direct from Turners three years ago. Registered as VU52 YGP, this was one of the 25 that was destined to be exported to Spain or France, at the time when MAN was taking over ERF."

The newly restored SG02 ZFP is fitted with a Cummins N14 525 engine and was originally owned by Rowen Bulk Services, and then later acquired by W Freeman & Sons. In 2011, Roberts Transport purchased the truck, which is believed to be one of only four of this specification left in existence, and it was then operated for a year, all the while with the intention of undertaking a restoration.

Aiming to get the vehicle back into reliable, everyday use meant a complete strip-down was inevitable. The chassis was

sandblasted by Paul Morris of Tarleton due to corrosion, and other light steel components were galvanised in many cases to prolong the truck's future working life.

After noting that a million kilometres had been covered to date, Graeme removed the engine and gearbox. The gearbox was reconditioned by Truck Transmissions of Blackburn, and work on the engine involved re-shelling the crank, fitting a new radiator, intercooler and an efficient Dynair fan cooling system, which is an American developed application that works and controls engine cooling by way of both air pressure and water temperature through a network of valves.

Graeme then carried out some work to the cab and a new paint job. The sign-writing and lining was carried out by a local signwriter, and to finish off the work, additional lights, a headboard, air horns, and an air-con unit were fitted to finally complete the 18 month restoration.



SG02 ZFP was originally owned by Rowen Bulk Services, and then later acquired by W Freeman & Sons.



Built in Britain and flying the flag!



The ERF was refurbished by Graeme Turner, of Turners of Much Hoole.

◀ Graham Roberts stands proudly beside the ERF.



The view from the ECX's driver's seat. The 'wood and leather' look is so British!

HISTORY

Ross Roadways was founded by Anthony and Graham Roberts, who entered into partnership with an eight-year-old Foden eight-wheeler bulk tipper. Anthony was a plant operator, and it was agreed that Graham would drive the newly purchased vehicle, after previously working for Richard Read of Longhope, Gloucestershire.

Typical loads involved hauling foundry coke from South Wales to the Midlands areas and then reloading gypsum or coal back into South Wales. The brothers initially used the Glyn Morris depot at Kilcot Garage, Gloucestershire for any maintenance and parking of the lorry, until these activities were relocated to the family home at Llandinabo, which is near Wormelow, Herefordshire.

The Foden was replaced after a year with a 1965 Atkinson eight-wheeler tipper which had been new to Hansons of Wakefield. As the Atkinson came in the green and red paintwork of Hansons, this was subsequently

adopted as the Roberts firm's livery. At this point the vehicle was operated day and night by both Anthony and Graham.

In 1972, the operating base was moved to new premises at Millpond Lane, Ross-on-Wye, and the following year, by now owning three vehicles, the partnership was joined by brother Haydn, who looked after the maintenance, and also Terry, who took over the role of organising the loads and any administrative work.

Many vehicles were to be purchased over the coming years, in particular a 1969 ERF LV, reg OVJ 888G, which was originally operated by Trevor Oakley of Hereford. This acquisition marked the beginning of the firm's involvement in the transportation of steel out of the South Wales steel mills, namely Orb Electrical Steels at Newport and also the British Steel Corporation factory at Llanwern, and these were to be an important key element of the firm's future revenue.

In 1973, the firm's first new lorry was

purchased from Praills of Hereford, an Atkinson Borderer Mk2 with a Cummins 220 and a 10-speed Fuller gearbox.

Following the spirit of the times in the road haulage industry, a pair of second-hand Volvo F88s were operated at this time, as the cab comforts and manoeuvrability were far superior to any British trucks of the period. Graham commented; "Driving our old British trucks, you were always frozen in the winter. This was at a time in the Seventies when the Volvo F86 was putting paid to many British lorries. I remember working alongside Volvo F86 artics that were hauling 21-tons when we were carrying only 14½-tons on our eight-wheelers, while their drivers were making no effort and were simply 'spinning the steering wheel' with one finger thanks to the power assistance.

But not everything was in the favour of the Volvos and Scania's. As we soon discovered by operating our F88s, British trucks were far simpler and cheaper to



SG02 ZFP now works alongside another ECX, reg number VU52 YGP.



The beginning – Foden bulk tipper 1271 RF.



Ross Roadways ERF, reg OVJ 888G, on steel work.



Left: The ERF B Series, reg A512 GAD, was bought as a 4x2 tractor but later converted to 6x2 configuration to comply with the 38-tonne rules.

Right: ERF E14 with a 320 14-litre Cummins engine and twin splitter gearbox, in HS Williams colours. Although the lorry was bought new after the takeover of this firm, it was decided to preserve Williams' identity, with Roberts' trucks running alongside those in HS Williams livery. Note the ex military Seddon Atkinson 401 parked alongside.





◀ Foden Alpha in HS Williams colours, registration P22 JRT. The faded lettering relates to the previous owners, Joseph Rice Road Haulage of Gloucester. This truck, with a Cummins engine and 16-speed ZF gearbox, always performed well and is still used today.



▲ Twin-steer ERF E14, reg E779 EDD.



▶ Seddon Atkinson 301, registration B223PUE, presently retired from service, but who knows what the future holds...



1987 Foden 6x4, reg E426 EFO, at 40-tonnes.

operate. So we switched back to buying British."

In 1982 the takeover of HS Williams Haulage of Ross-on-Wye was a significant event, and its fleet of four articulated units were added to the fleet. This allowed for further expansion into timber haulage from the Forest of Dean, and additional work concerned transporting raised access flooring tiles from a firm in Hereford.

Quickly outgrowing their Ross-on-Wye yard, the firm moved once again in 1987, to purpose-built premises at Whitchurch, which is conveniently adjacent to the A40 dual carriageway that runs between Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth.

For the bulk tipper operation the business has always favoured Crane Fruehauf trailers, the first of which was purchased new in 1975 and is still in use today. Subsequent Fruehauf trailers were of step-frame chassis design with 'bathtub' bodies, and these have also proved to be very reliable.

Today, the fleet focuses on a variety of work - steel products, animal feed, waste disposal, curtainsider, bulk, tanker and specialist loads, for which a number of trailers are needed.



Foden Alpha, registration W159UCJ, Cummins M11 405 engine. Bought new in 2000, hardly any trouble since then. Note wear to the paintwork that attests to the many miles use since the Millennium.

At the time of writing, Graham and Terry expressed concern regarding the future of the UK steel industry, in particular, Port Talbot, which, if closed would be devastating

for South Wales. It is hoped that this will be averted and that the trucks of the Roberts fleet will continue to fly the flag for the recently lost makes of both ERF and Foden. ❖

The Alternator

Richard Lofting looks into the workings of the alternator.



1 The alternator is an overlooked part of the engine charging system, but much more reliable than a dynamo.

Vehicles were fitted with dynamos until around the early 1970s, although many would have been fitted with an alternator as a replacement once the dynamo had 'given up'. When dynamos were in common use, the vehicle could have either a negative or positive earth, and the dynamo could be polarised for either system, but due to the solid state diodes and voltage regulator fitted to the alternator they are all negative earth.

Some early alternators required a separate regulator box, not unlike the dynamo set up. The later models were manufactured with the voltage regulator built into the alternator itself, making for a self contained unit.

The alternator works in the same way as a dynamo, in that the current is produced in a wire coil passing through a magnetic field. In the case of the alternator it can be seen as an 'inside out' dynamo, with the coils built into the case and the magnetic field produced by the rotator. This has several advantages, the first being that the commutator is dispensed with, as the coils aren't turning, and also the fact that the alternator generates AC current which is rectified with solid state diodes.

The magnetic field is generated within the rotator, which is mainly iron with a small coil that is fed DC current via a slip ring arrangement from the vehicle battery. The ignition warning lamp lights when the

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Be careful. The positive wire to the alternator is permanently live, so always disconnect the battery when working on the alternator as a short with a spanner could cause serious burns.
- If testing in-situ with the engine running be aware of the moving fan belt etc.

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Selection of screwdrivers.
- Small socket spanners.
- Medium sized soldering iron.
- A bearing puller may be required to get the bearings out.

ignition is switched on - it is wired through the rotator coil to earth. This provides current to initially energise the alternator. Once running, the current produced by the alternator will balance that coming from the ignition warning lamp and extinguish it. The advantages of making the alternator in this way means that it can rotate faster than a dynamo without any ill effects and of course, there's less wear and maintenance.

The AC current produced by the alternator is in three phases, using three coils spaced equally at 120 degrees around the stator, as the body is known. This is then converted by heavy duty diodes, which in essence are electronic one-way switches, and combined into one output of DC current. As in the dynamo, the output voltage of the alternator is regulated by controlling the field input. The modern alternator is controlled

electronically rather than by coils and switch contacts as fitted to the dynamo regulator box.

Due to its design and the electronic control of the output the alternator is much kinder to the vehicle battery and therefore should extend the battery life and keep it fully charged. The output from the alternator is a series of pulses produced from the rectified AC current from each of the stator coils.

As mentioned already, the alternator is hard wired to the battery, but at the battery end of the wire there should be a short section that is thinner than the main wire. This is a fusible link, and should there be a direct short within the alternator itself or the main wire to earth, this link will blow, preventing the main cable from glowing like an electric fire element and causing a vehicle fire.



2 All alternator variants have the voltage control components behind a plastic cover.

3 A more up-to-date A127i-100 alternator, as fitted to the Land Rover Discovery.



4 The terminal block. In this case they are screw terminals, but Lucas alternators tend to have spade terminals.

5 After 20 years of work this alternator has collected plenty of dirt inside of the case.

Test procedure

The easiest way to test if the alternator is functioning correctly is to check the voltage at the battery with a good test meter. If all is well you should be getting around 14 volts. If you then turn on the headlamps the voltage may drop a little at tick over but still not drop below about 13.9 volts. You should hear the engine note change as the lights are turned on as the load increases on the alternator

In the pictures shown, although the internals vary between makes, they are non the less similar and the components are easily recognised. Unless the windings are burnt out (very unlikely), then provided that you can get the parts for your particular alternator it is possible to keep it going. The usual trouble after many years service is that the bearings start to fail - initially a squeak or rumble may be heard. The brushes that run on the slip rings wear, but last a long time. The rectifier pack can

be changed, but you will need a soldering iron to unsolder and solder the wires. The same can be done with the slip rings.

Buyer Beware

I used to run a Volvo fitted with a Bosch alternator, and with a few rudimentary tests I deduced that the regulator was shot. A local vehicle electrical shop sold me a new regulator, and he said if this did not work it would need a new alternator. I managed to change it in the car park to no avail, and on return to the shop I didn't like the attitude of the salesman - he virtually told me to give him a deposit then and there for a new alternator. I stripped the alternator at home and could find no fault with the windings or diodes. I spoke to another auto electrician and he said it sounded like the regulator and he had them in stock. On comparing the two regulators one had 14.1 and the other had 28.2 written on them. The penny then dropped - the crook had

Richards tips

- Never run an engine with the alternator disconnected from the battery.
- Always isolate the alternator if welding on the vehicle, as any surge could destroy the diodes.
- Don't forget the main terminal on the alternator is always live!
- Check the alternator's output with a voltmeter at the battery.

sold me a regulator for a 24 volt alternator, but put it in a 12 volt box! With hindsight obviously it would not work. Needless to say I have never been back to the first shop - I wonder how many more unsuspecting people he has conned! The moral of the story is always check the numbers before fitting.



6 The bearings can be checked by rocking and spinning the shaft. In this case the bearings are a little noisy.

7 A paint brush and an air line soon has the workings clean again.



8 With the cover back on it is ready for further service, although it could do with the bearings changing.



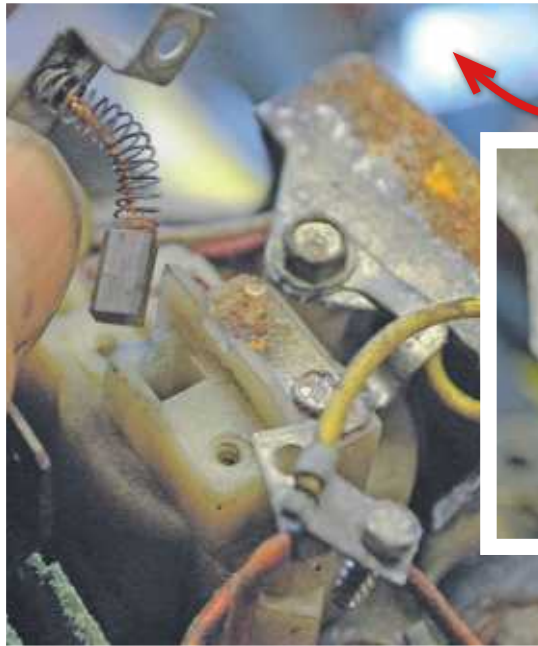
9 This is what happens if you keep your spare alternator under the bench - spiders and creepy crawlies move in.

10 An old paint brush is ideal to remove any accumulated crud.





11 A blow gun on an air line will get into all the nooks and crannies.



12 The brushes that run on the slip ring can be checked for length.



13 The rectifier pack as fitted to the Lucas ACR range of alternators.



14 The voltage regulator. These can be replaced if found to be faulty.

15 With the engine running the alternator should be putting out 13.9 to 14.1 volts, easily measured with a multimeter.



16 The slip rings can be seen here with one rather worn more than the other.



17 Bosch alternators are fitted with the regulator and brushes as one unit, making servicing easy and simple.



18 Before you can get the case apart you may have to remove the pulley and fan.



19 On this Lucas alternator you can see the individual diodes that make up the rectifier pack.



20 With the case apart changing the bearings is relatively simple, as all there is holding it in is a snap ring.



21 A typical example of a stator coil unit. This contains most of the wiring and remains stationary in operation.



22 A rotator, mainly iron with a small exciter coil inside. This is why an alternator can spin faster than a dynamo.

FINISH

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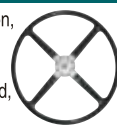
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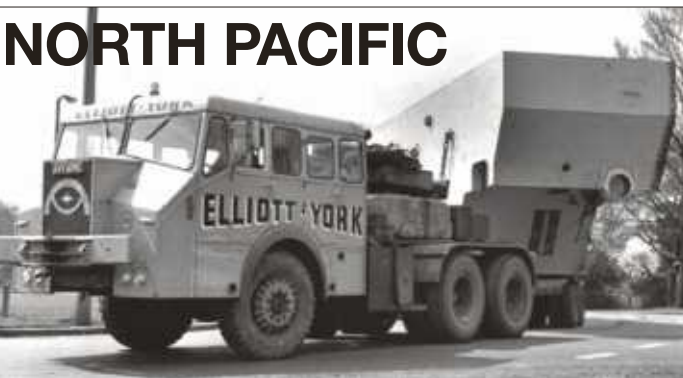


It was at the 11th hour and 59th minute that what was to become 935 XUC was saved from the cutting torch and – in time – this Atkinson L1366 was to eventually come into the busy life of Nottingham based Ian Patrick. Ian (and friends) were to spend 12 years restoring this slice of Walton-le-Dale's finest into what is now, a head turning classic. Bob Tuck hears the story.



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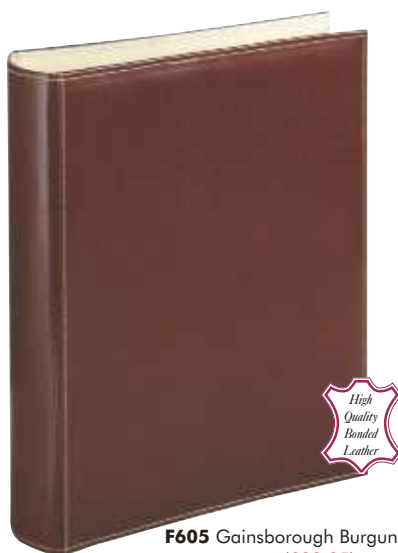


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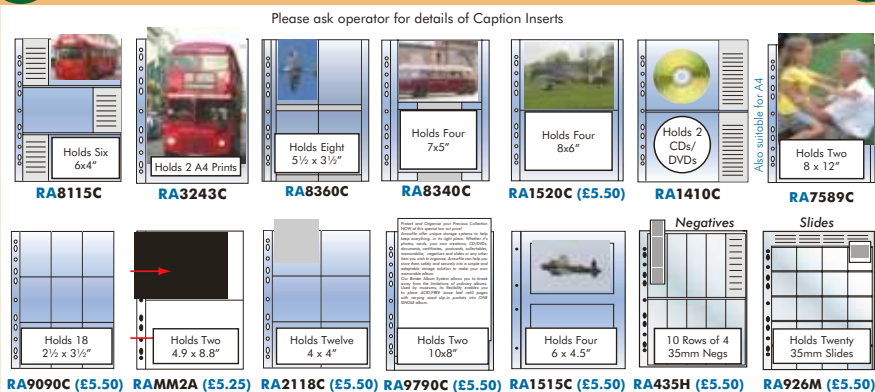


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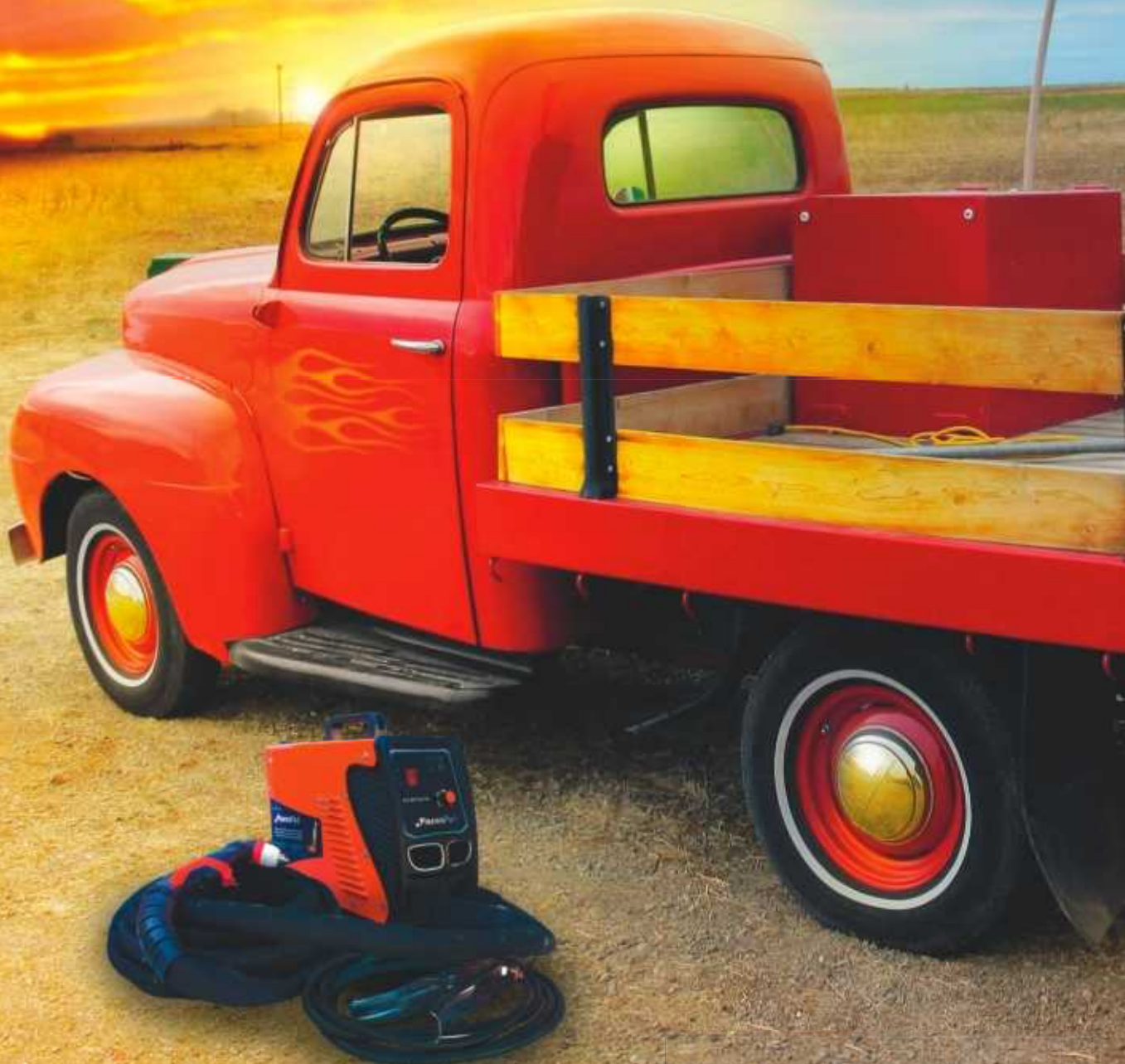
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